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8th plenary meeting
Friday, 25 September 2009, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Saudabayev (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Address by Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Serbia.

Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tadić: The United Nations is the only universal institution that unites us all as a global community of independent States. At the very heart of this indispensable Organization stands the General Assembly, the only place in the world where the sovereign voices of all countries are given an equal, legitimate say in the future course of mankind.

Safeguarding the principles of the United Nations Charter remains much more important than the policies of any single nation, especially during transformative periods such as this. The international system seems to be undergoing a paradigm shift that, in many ways, is comparable in scope to those that occurred in 1945 and 1989.

No one is yet able to reliably predict how deep the change will turn out to be. What is becoming evident is that interrelated factors — the most recent of which is the global economic crisis — have caused the arrival of a new set of circumstances on the world stage. A broad repositioning appears to be taking place. The global balance of power is shifting as new financial models compete for primacy. All in all, international relations are becoming less predictable.

Achieving consensus on fundamental issues that affect us all has never been more important. As United Nations Member States, it is incumbent upon us to work more closely together to reaffirm the rules that govern the international system, to reinforce the territorial integrity of Member States, to entrench interdependence and to complete the transition from the old order, based on political and economic domination, to one established on equitable cooperation among all nations.

That is the only way to build a future of global peace, stability and prosperity. It is the only way to enhance the dialogue among civilizations, to make multilateralism more effective and to provide for sustainable development and eradicate poverty throughout the world. And it is the only way to effectively fight terrorism and cross-border organized crime and to promote nuclear disarmament.

We must also work more in concert with one another to combat the effects of climate change. That

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will continue to be strongly emphasized over the course of Serbia's two-year presidency of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environmental Programme. As part of our efforts, we have proposed the establishment of a regional climate change centre in Belgrade, Serbia.

As a responsible global citizen, we have underlined the necessity of agreeing on a fair and balanced emissions reduction scheme and, in particular, on a new comprehensive climate agreement — one that will secure eco-friendly investments, stimulate innovation and facilitate the global spread of technologies, knowledge and experience.

In short, working towards a "green economy" will decisively contribute to placing the whole world firmly on the path towards a cleaner, more sustainable path.

How we conduct ourselves at this time of great transformation will constitute a precedent with far-reaching consequences for generations to come. Simply put, we are at a point of decision: will we choose a world in which there are no rules as exceptions become the new norms, devoid of any meaning except "might makes right"? Or will we opt to solidify the great gains achieved when the principles of an equitable international order were embodied in the United Nations Charter?

I believe that only the latter alternative provides a future that all United Nations Member States can work in concert to bring about. The starting point remains universal respect for international law. No one should be above it, no one should stand beyond its reach and no one should feel at liberty to declare an exception to its jurisdiction and scope. And yet that is precisely what was recently attempted.

I come before the Assembly as the President of a country that is trapped at the centre of one of the most dangerous challenges to the universality of the international system since the founding of the United Nations. I speak of UDI — the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic Albanian authorities of Serbia's southern province of Kosovo and Metohija. This attempt at secession stands in direct violation of Serbia's democratic Constitution, as well as the basic principles of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Some say Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence is a unique case. But in truth it is an attempt to forcibly partition a Member State of the United Nations against its will and without regard for the firm opposition of the Security Council. It is an attempt to impose a nineteenth-century outcome on a twenty-first century challenge. Serbia will never, under any circumstances, implicitly or explicitly, recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of the ethnic Albanian authorities of our southern province.

We will continue to vigorously defend our integrity in a non-confrontational manner, using all peaceful means at our disposal. That is why, at the very outset of this grave crisis, Serbia ruled out the use of force. We chose to respond to Kosovo with the utmost responsibility and restraint. Serbia opted for a diplomatic approach, the result of which is that a vast majority of United Nations Member States have refrained from recognizing the unilateral declaration of independence in Kosovo and have continued to abide by their Charter obligation to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, allow me once again to sincerely thank these countries for their adherence to the principles of international law.

While categorically rejecting violence and unilateralism, Serbia has been equally emphatic in demanding that justice be delivered through the proper legal means at the disposal of any United Nations Member State. As part of our constructive approach, we decided to contest the issue of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence before the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, which was tasked by General Assembly resolution 63/3 with issuing an advisory opinion on whether that declaration is in accordance with international law. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Member States that the Court has concluded the preliminary, written phase of its proceedings in the case. Public hearings are scheduled to begin on 1 December, with a decision by the Court expected sometime next year.

Let me express my sincere gratitude to all those countries that have chosen to actively support Serbia's strategic choice to transfer the Kosovo issue to the judicial arena. The case marks the first time in the history of the Court that it has been asked to consider the legality of an attempt at secession by an ethnic group from a United Nations Member State. There is

no doubt that the Court's conclusions will constitute a powerful legal precedent, with overarching consequences for the United Nations system. The outcome will either strongly deter other separatist movements from attempting to secede, or produce a result that could encourage them to act in a similar fashion. Plainly stated, should Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence be allowed to stand, a door would open for challenging the territorial integrity of any United Nations Member State.

The uniquely important nature of this case has been acknowledged by the international community. As we know, all five permanent members of the Security Council have confirmed their participation in the public hearings before the International Court of Justice. It is in this context that I appeal to all Member States to respect the fact that the Court continues to be actively engaged on the issue. Its deliberations should not be prejudged and its work should not be obstructed. The Court's proceedings have to be allowed to run their course without political pressure, such as any further recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, I encourage all non-recognizing Member States to stay the course. By maintaining respect for my country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, together we will help ensure that international law continues to close in on the issue of unilateral declarations of independence.

Serbia's decision to turn to the International Court of Justice to contest the Kosovo issue has been complemented by a policy of constructive engagement with all legitimate actors on the ground in Kosovo. We maintain support for a reconfigured United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and its continuing indispensability. We have also welcomed a status-neutral European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), working in our southern province on the basis of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which continues to operate under the overall authority of the United Nations. I call on all responsible stakeholders invested in the future of Kosovo to work more closely with the Government of Serbia on implementing in full the Secretary-General's six-point plan (S/2008/354, annex I), which was welcomed by the Security Council in November 2008.

This is a time for leadership and working together, not for increasing the divide. We all have our constraints, and they should be respected. Let us create new opportunities for achieving practical results, by engaging with one another on a host of concrete questions for the benefit of all residents of Kosovo province, including the Serbs — the community most at risk in all of Europe.

(*spoke in French*)

Democracy in Serbia is sound; our society rests on a solid foundation and our values have been strongly confirmed by law. The basis of our strategic approach to national development is the call for all European nations to share their common destiny. On many occasions our actions, in very difficult circumstances, have proved our determination to become a member of the European Union (EU). Despite setbacks, our core strategic priority remains that of attaining EU membership, not merely on grounds of geography, heritage or economic prosperity, but also because of the essential values that we share. These are values that proclaim soft power in foreign policy and the primacy of law in domestic affairs; achieving consensus in Brussels and standards of human rights throughout the EU. These are values that proclaim freedom of movement for all citizens of Serbia in the Schengen area, the tangible result of our process of entry into the EU, which we hope to see implemented on 1 January 2010. This will bring us closer to Europe, for the right to travel without a visa is to the citizens of Serbia the expression of what the EU means on a daily basis.

But these are also values that have led us to modernize our administration, to adopt exemplary legislation in areas such as anti-discrimination and the protection of minorities, and to redouble our efforts towards regional reconciliation. That is an important reason why Serbia will shortly complete its full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia: it is a legal and moral obligation towards victims, towards ourselves and, above all, towards future generations.

As the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall approaches, we must not forget that the objective of uniting all the nations of Europe under the same roof has not yet been attained. Much remains to be done. Expansion fatigue must not emerge as a new reality in Europe. Solidarity must remain a high priority. It will never be time to consider an exit strategy with regard to the Western Balkans.

Permit me to stress that the facts are clear. All benefit from expansion: old and new members, as well

as potential members of the EU. This goes beyond our wildest dreams, even at a time of economic challenges and political demoralization. That is because the values that unite us are strong and just.

(*spoke in English*)

In that context, let me underline the necessity of strengthening regional cooperation. In June, Serbia hosted 15 heads of State during the Central European Summit, whose main topic was the interdependence of the economy, EU integration and energy. That demonstrated our commitment to acting constructively and working closely together with neighbouring countries to ensure that regional peace is consolidated.

With regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia is a guarantor of the Dayton Agreement. Let there be no doubt that we will remain committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that neighbouring country, as we will to those of all other United Nations Member States in the region and across the world.

In short, as the strategic anchor of stability in the Western Balkans, Serbia will invest even greater efforts in completing the democratic transformation of our part of Europe.

Serbia's robust European vision is complemented by our strong determination to pursue a carefully balanced, artfully executed and active foreign policy aimed at engagement with nations throughout the world, near and far. That is in our long-term interest and will not change. Therefore, our engagement with Brussels, Moscow, Washington and Beijing — the four enduring pillars of Serbia's foreign policy — will continue to be strengthened in the time ahead.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize another important dimension of our foreign policy. Serbia will continue to deepen ties with proud nations across the globe, many of which are members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). My country is the largest successor to a founding member of the Movement. Serbia's capital, Belgrade, was the site of the first NAM summit, held in 1961. That is why I have proposed that the fiftieth anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement be celebrated in Belgrade with an extraordinary summit under the auspices of the Egyptian chairmanship.

Let me emphasize that Serbia will continue to engage with NAM countries, not only to honour a legacy from the past and to renew traditional friendships, but also because we believe that international stability and prosperity cannot be consolidated without taking into account the views of the majority in the global family of nations.

I close by saying that the time for anyone to procrastinate, to try half-measures or to delay and discourage is coming to a close. In its place, we are entering a period in which only results matter — a period of consequence and momentous choice. Now comes our time of testing.

Our vision is simple: the universal application of the principles contained in the United Nations Charter, the strengthening of international law and human rights in an increasingly interdependent world, the equitable development of the global economy and the sustainable management of the environment throughout the world. Let us all have the courage to see that vision through to its rapid and noble completion.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Serbia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mori: I wish to offer my warm congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We are confident that he will live up to the high standards set by his esteemed predecessor.

Allow me to begin my remarks today by thanking members of the General Assembly for their positive

action this past June in adopting resolution 63/281, on climate change and its possible security implications. Developed and developing countries alike worked together with the smallest and most vulnerable to do something that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. It is now becoming all the more compelling that we work together, as we did in adopting that resolution, to act decisively in confronting this threat.

The importance of this groundbreaking resolution cannot be overstated. Its message is clear: climate change is a threat to international peace and security. The resolution is a historic milestone for this body. Climate change, including its far-reaching effects and its security implications, is the defining issue for the world today — an issue that should command the attention and support of everyone.

When we met here last year, the world economy was going through a time of unprecedented crisis. Fearing that the global economy was heading for collapse, the world stood together and, with strong determination and swiftness, adopted difficult but concrete measures aimed at averting that global disaster. In keeping with the spirit of cooperation, it is indispensable for the international community to be steadfast and bold enough to take equally difficult decisions to address the climate change crisis without delay. Accelerating action by and cooperation among Governments, the private sector and civil society is imperative in order to meet the challenge posed by climate change.

Given the critical importance of climate change to my country, allow me to address that issue here again. I thank the Secretary-General for bringing more attention to climate change and for convening the high-level Summit on Climate Change on 22 September 2009.

For us Micronesians and our fellow Pacific islanders, including those of other parts of the world, climate change is a matter of survival as peoples, cultures and nations. For centuries, the people of Micronesia have lived on their small islands, many less than a metre above sea level. They have enjoyed a life dependent on the bounties of the sea and the harvest from the land. They have developed a culture of respect for nature and have lived in harmony with their natural surroundings. They built outrigger canoes and rigged them with sails from pandanus leaves. Long before Magellan, they sailed the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, aided only by an intimate understanding of the stars and ocean currents.

Sadly, today's disregard for our planet is slowly making the ocean that has always nurtured us the very instrument of our destruction. Micronesia is already experiencing the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change. The sea-level rise, changing weather patterns and an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, such as typhoons, are all undermining our development efforts. The years of El Niño have brought more droughts and increased rainfall, causing substantial damage to staple crops. Our taro patches and arable lands are limited to begin with. Compounding the problem is the intrusion of salt water, damaging basic crops, including taro and coconut trees — our tree of life. What if the melting of polar ice sheets and glaciers were to reach an irreversible point? The outcome is crystal-clear: Micronesia and all low-lying islands would disappear from the face of the Earth. But the effects would go much further, endangering coastal cities and communities all over the world, including Manhattan.

Our vulnerability compels us to take proactive concerted action in seeking fast-track solutions. In that regard, I am pleased to share two specific mitigation measures taken by my Government.

The first action taken by Micronesia is a proposal that has been submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The aim of the proposal is to make a modest beginning to evaluating rapid mitigation strategies by establishing a four-year programme for experts to report on ways to achieve rapid mitigation by dealing with short-lived non-carbon dioxide agents, including black carbon, under the auspices of UNFCCC.

This year, Micronesia and Mauritius proposed a two-part amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase down the production and use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Secondly, our proposal would expand efforts to destroy so-called banks of discarded refrigerants that are harmful to climate. Our proposal, with additional sponsors, has started a global dialogue on the demonstrated versatility of the Montreal Protocol as a treaty for early climate protection.

I want to commend the North American countries for their strong support and action on HFCs. Recently, the United States, Canada and Mexico added their

support to the proposal to use the Montreal Protocol to phase down HFCs. That kind of cooperation, between developed and developing countries, is what we need. We therefore urge the North American countries and others to support the second part of the amendment proposed by Micronesia and Mauritius.

The bottom line is that Micronesia has already suffered the effects of climate change. We therefore seek to draw the attention of the world to any and all possibilities for rapid mitigation action that could buy us more time while the long-term war against carbon dioxide proceeds.

Allow me now to briefly focus on several other areas of priority to my country. To effectively manage and conserve our biodiversity and limited natural resources, Micronesia continues to work with other Governments in our subregion to meet the commitments of the Micronesia Challenge, which calls for the conservation of at least 30 per cent of the area's marine resources and 20 per cent of its land resources by 2020. We acknowledge the support of our friends and development partners who have helped us implement that initiative.

As part of our national development agenda, especially in the priority areas of health, education and private sector development, we are seeking to acquire comprehensive broadband connectivity capacity through undersea fibre-optic cable. That will enable us to meet the objectives of the World Summit on the Information Society and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We are also taking the necessary measures to liberalize the environment for telecommunications services in order to promote competition and to put in place an appropriate national information and communications technology plan.

To achieve those objectives, we look to the United Nations system, the International Telecommunication Union and our development partners for their support and guidance.

Micronesia is indeed undertaking a wide variety of tasks as it strives to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We recognize that some of the Goals can be especially difficult for us to sustain, even though we may be on track to achieve them. Progress towards the MDGs is inherently threatened by the nature of our vulnerability to climate change.

As an island State with a large excusive economic zone abundant with marine and fisheries resources, we are naturally concerned about unsustainable fishing practices. We are also concerned about the unabated incidence of illegal, unreported unregulated fishing, which only robs the coastal island nations of their most precious resource, which is fish.

At a time when the world food market is deeply affected by the food crisis and economic turmoil, Micronesians are increasingly dependent on the bounties of the sea to provide their nourishment and their economic development. That is precisely why we remain concerned about the collateral catches and discards in commercial fisheries, as they deprive our people of the critical resources that they depend upon for their subsistence living and that are of cultural importance. The international community must help us to find ways to minimize and eliminate that wasteful harvesting of resources. Economic resources are critical to successfully implementing our nation-building efforts.

Micronesia has a genuine interest in the reform of the Security Council — a Council that must embrace an expansion in both of its membership categories, to be more inclusive and broadly representative and to reflect the present realities of the world in the new century. We urge the President of the Assembly to carry forward the intergovernmental negotiations that were begun during its sixty-third session. I reiterate our support for the candidacies of Japan, India and Germany for permanent membership on the Council.

December is around the corner and the world needs to seal the deal in Copenhagen. The task will not be easy, but we must not fail. Millions of lives are at risk and our homelands are in peril.

Micronesia is a member of the Alliance of Small Island States and our position is well known. We have repeatedly called for a strong agreement that must leave no island behind. Our collective failure to meet this challenge now will lead us towards colossal and irreversible damage to our Mother Earth.

When the health of our planet needs remedy and the lives of millions depend on our action, we must respond and take appropriate and swift action. I am aware that different States have different ideas of what a strong deal means, but mistrust between countries cannot become a reason for failure, nor can economic considerations become an excuse for inaction.

Throughout the history of humankind, there have been examples of nations that disagreed coming together for their own survival during a crisis, be it during a time of war, economic hardship or epidemic. Today, that crisis is climate change. There is simply no more time to waste, and I will therefore stop here. Talk is cheap; action speaks louder than words. And we need action. Let us go to Copenhagen to seal the deal. We will all meet again in Copenhagen.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Emanuel Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sassou Nguesso (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to welcome the election of Mr. Ali Treki to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, which is taking place at a time when major challenges continue to test the effectiveness of our Organization. From this rostrum, I would also like to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, and to his courageous and energetic actions throughout his term. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his exceptional work at the head of our Organization at a time in history when important reforms are being undertaken.

I wish to emphasize the extent to which, now more than ever, the United Nations symbolizes hope in the face of the major challenges threatening our planet, which no nation can meet alone. People have never had such need of that hope.

The Summit on Climate Change, held recently at the initiative of the Secretary-General, called once again upon the collective conscience of all nations large and small, united and stirred by a common resolve to work to build the better world of which the founding fathers of our Organization dreamed. In this village that our world has become, we Members of the United Nations are the guarantors of people's liberties and rights, their security and their future, their dignity and the promise of world peace.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados), Vice-President, took the chair.

I know what solidarity owes to the dedication of the United Nations, and what peace owes to its actions, commitment and determination. And I foresee what the future will owe it. It is here that are forged freedom and human rights, solidarity and universal justice — in a word, the destiny of humankind. The men and women here know that more than a billion people still live on less than a dollar a day and that children die unnecessarily of hunger and disease. All of us here know how climate change is abetting these scourges and how the countries least responsible for it suffer the most from its effects. Producing only 3.8 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, our continent is the most affected by global warming. Poor populations are its main victims. The agriculture, fauna and infrastructure of coastal regions are on the front line.

The Brundtland report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (A/42/427, annex), submitted to the General Assembly in 1987, gave us, more than 20 years ago, the following definition of sustainable development: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (*Ibid., p. 54*).

Sustainable development is not a concept, as we have all learned at our own expense; it is an issue fraught with genuine responsibilities. The balance of ecosystems has never been so threatened. Urgent measures are required in Africa and in all nations to guarantee food security, combat drought and desertification, and restore natural ecosystems. Such measures require the mobilization of significant resources.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados), Vice-President took the chair.

When one's main resource is the forest, one bears an immense responsibility. We represent the Earth's second most important environmental lung, after the Amazon. Together with our Latin American brothers, we are aware of our responsibility as guardians of forests that represent an essential treasure for all humankind.

Since the 1990s, the Congo has worked continuously with the international community to combat global warming and to implement a policy of forest protection. Today, our action is more essential than ever. Our forests represent vast carbon sinks of global importance for regulating the greenhouse-gas effect. They are our common salvation and home to 400 species of mammals, more than 1,000 species of birds and more than 10,000 species of plants, 3,000 of which are endemic. Gorillas, forest buffaloes, chimpanzees, bonobos and forest elephants — these are what must inspire our action, as they help to maintain the ecological functions of natural systems.

In 1999, the countries of the Congo basin launched a unique forestry experiment by proclaiming their common resolve to preserve their biodiversity and promote the sustainable and joint management of their forest ecosystems, as well as by ensuring the use of resources for Central Africa's economic and social development. The resulting plan is one of the strategic components of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It represents a significant contribution by Central Africa to the effort to address the problems related to global warming. Unfortunately, the funds necessary for the programme's implementation are still lacking.

The countries of the region have nonetheless made great progress in forest preservation. Today, Africa requests that the forthcoming Copenhagen Conference consider mechanisms for adaptation, mitigation, capacity-building, technology transfer and financing based on the principle of equity. In Copenhagen, we must take earnest account of the forests, which represent carbon sinks of global importance for regulating and stabilizing our planet's climate.

The economic and financial crisis, whose effects we continue to feel, is the most serious economic recession that the world has experienced since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This crisis should help to raise our awareness. It justifies an overhaul of the international financial architecture and can enable us, through new commitments, to realize the vision of a more unified and equitable world. But time is running out, in Africa more than elsewhere, and the adoption of decisive measures can wait no longer.

Halfway towards the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, our success will depend on the international community's new choices and on the effective implementation of announced measures. The commitments undertaken at the April 2009 London summit of the Group of 20 must be honoured, and we hope that the meeting to be held in Pittsburgh will fulfil all our expectations.

In its capacity as African Union co-mediator, together with Libya, of the crisis between Chad and the Sudan, the Republic of the Congo welcomes the willingness, expressed by both parties at the African Union summit, to relaunch negotiations based on the Doha Agreement of 3 May 2009. We also note with satisfaction that the tripartite initiative aimed at a joint settlement in the subregion, with the assistance of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, the General Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States, the Commission of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the General Secretariat of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, should enable us to curb the insecurity on the borders of Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad for the long term.

We welcome the significant progress seen recently in relations among the countries of the Great Lakes region on our continent. The warming of relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, the revitalization of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, and the normalization of relations between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo reflect the common will of the Great Lakes countries to work to consolidate peace.

With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, we encourage any initiative to promote sustained dialogue between the parties in the quest for a definitive and equitable solution to the crisis.

We welcome the unanimous adoption, on 24 September 2009 at the historic Security Council

summit (see S/PV.6191), of resolution 1887 (2009), which reflects the determination of the international community to work towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation for a safer world.

In the light of these many challenges, we call for strict compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in all its aspects, including the right of all countries to develop nuclear technologies for civilian purposes.

The Congolese people renewed their confidence in me last July. That confidence is based on the concept that we call the "path of the future". That path proposes opening the Congo to modernization and industrialization, to the pursuit of peacebuilding, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, to the promotion of good governance and to the protection of human rights. We have pledged to open a new path to the future and to mark it with proper behaviour and clean technologies. We have pledged in my country to never sit on our hands and watch the Earth suffer. That is a promise which I repeat here.

Our African storytellers have often said that men were the dream of the Earth. I solemnly promise that not only will Africans do everything in their power to never become its nightmare; they will, on the contrary, open up a gateway to the future for all of us.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Congo for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Mswati III: It is a pleasure for me to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Our coming here as leaders gives us the opportunity to debate global challenges as per our objectives and goals as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations is a forum where we all come together to share ideas, review progress and come up with strategies to deal with world issues that need our attention and input. The founders of this Organization had a noble idea of addressing world issues amicably with a view to avoiding confrontation. Therefore, we are supposed to meet as equal partners to debate issues that affect us as the world community, in a forum where we are guided by the principles of trust, respect and natural justice. The aim of the United Nations is to bring joy and peace to the nations of the world. Let us make sure that people develop confidence in the United Nations so that they can approach the Organization when they have problems.

We note that Africa has multiple problems that seriously hinder its progress in the areas of health, the economy, poverty and social welfare, which all come under the Millennium Development Goals. It is our aim as the African continent to evolve from being third world countries to a first world status. That calls on us — Africa in general and Swaziland in particular — to work harder and smarter in order to realize that goal and generate a strong economy for the betterment of the lives of all our peoples.

However, we realize that we cannot effectively deal with the challenges confronting us alone, mainly because our resources are limited. It is through the United Nations that we continue to forge partnerships with different countries so that we work together to grow our economies. We appeal to the developed nations to recognize our hard work and to increase our access to soft loans and grants to support development programmes and poverty-reduction strategies. We call on the United Nations to continue supporting national initiatives aimed at eventually transforming our economies to first world economies.

However, the global financial and economic crisis has made the situation difficult, especially for developing countries. It restrains us from achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The secondary effects of the crisis are now hitting hard on developing economies, like that of the

Kingdom of Swaziland, whose export trade is largely dependent on performance in developed global markets. In our case, several Government interventions have been undertaken to rescue sectors such as the pulp and textile industries. Added to this is the need to mobilize resources and promote financial inclusion in order to stimulate economic growth at the grassroots level. In that regard, financial inclusion remains an important stimulus for poverty alleviation programmes in developing countries like the Kingdom of Swaziland.

We are encouraged by signs of recovery from the crisis, and we are confident that the United Nations will continue to play its leading role in the efforts to find a speedy resolution to the situation so that we may all focus on development issues for the benefit of all our peoples.

It is most unfortunate that while we do our level best to improve our economies, we continue to be confronted by disturbances and conflicts that include wars and coups. We condemn those acts, as they lead to untold suffering for millions of our peoples. As nations of the world, let us come together and make sure that such acts are not supported or encouraged. We call upon all nations of the world to isolate and discourage the sympathizers and sponsors. Where there are problems, the peoples of the world must know that they can address the challenges that they encounter through peaceful engagement and dialogue.

If we want to achieve peace in the world, it is important that we reduce and eventually eradicate nuclear arms, which pose a threat to our planet. We need to encourage nations that are at the stage of developing, and those that already possess, nuclear capability to utilize it for power generation that supports and stimulates economic growth. Therefore, we encourage the International Atomic Energy Agency to continue to monitor countries that are developing nuclear arms so that they may be stopped. It must also ensure that countries that already have nuclear capability reduce and eventually eradicate their nuclear arms so that they become a thing of the past. In order to accelerate the eradication of nuclear arms, the United Nations must set targets and timelines for compliance.

Another issue of concern is the continuing delay of the reform of the Security Council. Many nations have come to the conclusion that the Council membership needs to be expanded so that it is more representative, so that its decisions may be owned by all Member States.

Africa has adopted firm and clear resolutions on the Council composition they would like to see. Those decisions were further affirmed at the recent summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. Regrettably, we still have not seen meaningful progress on that matter. We therefore would like to call on all members of the Security Council to address that issue with the urgency that it deserves.

We are encouraged by the call made by fellow leaders for us to open a new page in the work of the United Nations by approaching global matters collectively. It is imperative that the United Nations take the lead in all issues that affect mankind. The reform of the Security Council is one such area that could clearly demonstrate the new approach to issues.

The Kingdom of Swaziland reiterates its support for the efforts deployed by the international community under the auspices of the United Nations towards a political solution to the issue of Western Sahara. We reaffirm that the initiative by the Kingdom of Morocco for considerable autonomy for Western Sahara is the beginning of a realistic and credible move. The Kingdom of Swaziland calls upon all parties to join the process in order to implement Security Council resolutions 1813 (2008) and 1871 (2009).

The Kingdom of Swaziland continues to support efforts to bring lasting peace to the situation in the Darfur region, Somalia, Madagascar and other parts of our continent.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the support and assistance being extended to the Inclusive Government and the people of the Republic of Zimbabwe by the nations of the world and by international organizations. I also wish to echo the call and appeal of the Southern African Development Community for the immediate removal of all sanctions against Zimbabwe, in order to ensure the speedy recovery of the economy of that country for the benefit of its long-suffering people.

As we gather here, we also wait with anticipation for the outcome of the Israeli and Palestinian peace efforts. We have seen the two parties enter into promising peace agreements in the past that, regrettably, faltered along the way. We call upon the

two parties to continue to pursue peace to avoid loss of life and to live in harmony.

We are happy to acknowledge the improvements in the relations between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. That new development has resulted in the international community responding positively to the request of Taiwan to be involved in United Nations agencies, as evidenced by the granting of observer status in the World Health Assembly. We look forward to seeing Taiwan being allowed to fully contribute to humanity by being given adequate participation in other United Nations specialized agencies.

It is encouraging that this year's General Assembly was preceded by the Summit on Climate Change, where issues of environmental protection were given priority, as they are critical to all our development strategies. The Summit noted that some developed countries pollute the environment, mainly through gas emissions, despite all the protocols in place to protect it.

I am confident that the Summit was able to mobilize adequate political support to guide the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Copenhagen in December, where developed countries will be able to share their experiences and the challenges that they faced. This will inform the agenda that will lead to the transfer of skills and technology so that, as developing countries pursue their growth, they can avoid the mistakes of the past.

We cannot overemphasize the need to protect the environment, as it is a precious gift from God to humanity and must be preserved for generations to come. We support the call for the establishment of a major fund to cater to all projects related to climate change. We are hopeful that Copenhagen will come up with solutions for funding climate-change projects that will be predictable, accessible and incremental. The Kingdom of Swaziland is determined to work harder to meet the targets set by the United Nations.

In conclusion let me say that the Kingdom of Swaziland appreciates the good work of the United Nations and its related agencies, which remain the only hope for overcoming the many complex challenges facing the world today. We therefore take pride in reaffirming our commitment to the principles and ideals contained in the United Nations Charter.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the King of Swaziland for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Mongolia.

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tsakhia: Let me join others in extending our sincere congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his unanimous election to preside over this session of the General Assembly. I am confident that under his able stewardship this session will mark an important milestone in meeting the formidable challenges of our times.

And the challenges we face as a human family are unprecedented indeed. No nation, no country is immune to the ruthless grip of the multitude of global crises: economy and finance, fuel and food, flu pandemics and climate change. These and other global challenges require global solutions underpinned by a new multilateralism. Multilateralism that is effective, proactive and commensurate with today's demands. Never has the world needed an effective multilateralism as much as we do now; as the Secretary-General has rightly put it, "This is the ultimate multilateral moment" (*A/64/1, para. 4*).

Mongolia highly commends the strong leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the effort to make this Organization the centre of the new multilateralism. We also applaud his unwavering commitment to mobilizing broad political support to address today's pressing challenges. Thanks to his initiative, on the 22nd of this month we witnessed an unprecedented gathering of world leaders. That has provided the necessary political impetus for Copenhagen, and I was both humbled and honoured to

serve as one of the co-chairs of the round tables. As a result, we have all agreed that in Copenhagen we must reach the long-awaited agreement. The political will was clearly displayed. The deal must be within our grasp.

Climate change poses a truly existential threat to humanity. As a country intimately affected by climate change, Mongolia deems it important to complement global efforts with those at regional and subregional levels. With that in mind, we have proposed a North-east Asia Summit on Climate Change. A series of preparatory meetings have been held over the last two years, including meetings with experts and young people, and with senior officials and ministers, in March and May respectively.

It has become increasingly evident that extensive effects of climate change have already appeared in most parts of the subregion, which has become more exposed to drought; desertification; reduced water resources; land degradation; increased occurrence of natural disasters and melting of permafrost, glaciers and snow cover. The resulting poverty, food shortages and spread of infectious disease will have an increasing effect on the sustainable development of the countries in the region. Hence the urgent need for joint efforts to redress the situation, mitigate risks and enhance those countries' adaptive capacity. We remain hopeful that they will continue their active engagement in the preparations for the Summit next year.

Allow me to share briefly our views on issues we deem important as we collectively seek to identify effective responses to the global crises. First, my delegation believes that the multiple nature of the crises has to be taken into account in order to find an adequate response at the global level. This in itself is a daunting task, requiring of us the courage to rise beyond mere national or group interests in order to survive collectively in our one — global — human village.

Secondly, in all our policies and actions we need to focus on people — on the human costs of overcoming the dire consequences of multiple crises. According to the World Bank's latest report, released last week, the ongoing global economic, financial and food crises have plunged hundreds of millions more people into the iron grip of poverty, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy and ill-health.

Despite this grim situation we are nonetheless encouraged by a broadly shared recognition that the vulnerable countries, including landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) ought to be assisted to withstand the harsh impact of the crises. In this regard, we look forward to the Group of 20 meeting in Pittsburgh to substantially increase support and assistance to vulnerable and low-income countries.

Every sixth Member of the United Nations is a landlocked developing country with inherent development handicaps. Indeed, lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness from world markets and the consequent high transportation costs and undue delays are major impediments for LLDCs. Hence, Mongolia, together with other like-minded countries, has endeavoured to promote the common position and interests of the Group of LLDCs at both the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. The recent establishment of an international think tank for LLDCs in Ulaanbaatar will, in our view, enhance our coordinated efforts for the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Thirdly, the marginalization and inadequate representation of the developing world in global decision-making constitute another drawback to the strength of the new multilateralism. Hence the need for a reformed global governance structure. Mongolia believes that, with its impartiality and universal legitimacy, the United Nations is uniquely placed to serve as the centre of the new multilateralism. Our world Organization has embarked on a process of reform in order to better respond to multifaceted challenges. Important progress has been made in several reform areas, yet more efforts are needed to adapt the United Nations to the realities of the twenty-first century.

We expect the General Assembly negotiations on Security Council reform to make meaningful progress at this session by meeting the demand of the overwhelming majority of Member States to expand the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. A revitalized General Assembly, a greater role for the Economic and Social Council in global economic governance and enhanced United Nations capacity in building democracy and peacebuilding are also needed. Mongolia fully supports Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's efforts to improve

the management, efficiency and internal cohesion of the United Nations system.

With a view to making our humble contribution to promoting effective international cooperation in the economic, social and related fields, Mongolia has proposed its candidature for consideration at the election next month for membership of the Economic and Social Council for 2010-2012. We are deeply grateful to our fellow members of the Asian Group for their endorsement of our candidature and look forward to the kind support of the broader membership of the United Nations.

Fourthly, in order to find effective solutions to global crises we need to do away with the triple deficit — a deficit of political will and commitment; a deficit of implementation; and a deficit of resources — that all too often has impeded the pursuit of our common efforts. Those are some of the issues that in our view warrant the consideration of the international community in order to formulate our collective approach to the pressing challenges at hand.

Mongolia has continuously based its foreign policy on active participation in multilateral cooperation through the United Nations. Our engagement has ranged from non-proliferation and disarmament to promoting democracy and literacy and from addressing the special needs of LLDCs to responding to climate change and contributing to peacekeeping operations, programmes and funds.

As a North-East Asian nation with an internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia stands for a nuclear-weapon-free Korean peninsula. Achieving a comprehensive solution to the nuclear issue through dialogue is of utmost importance. We hope that all countries concerned will look to the future in the interest of peace and stability in the region. We stand ready to contribute to this effort.

Yesterday the international community witnessed another strong signal of strengthened multilateralism, particularly in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Security Council summit chaired by President Obama (see S/PV.6191) confirmed the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons by adopting the historic resolution 1887 (2009).

Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the renowned Brahimi report (A/55/305), which charted a renewed vision for United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are proud that Mongolia has joined the ranks of active members of the United Nations peacekeeping family. With its latest deployment of a battalion to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, we have become one of the top 20 troop contributors. Mongolia stands committed to enhancing its contribution, including through hosting training for civil police and medical personnel at its peacekeeping operations training centre.

Later this year we will observe the twentieth anniversary of the start of the democratic evolution in my home country. Mongolia is proud of its successful democratic transition and major gains in the political, economic, social and spiritual areas of the life of our society. Yet, as a young democracy, my country is also intimately aware of the complex challenges faced by countries in transition. Democracy and respect for human rights are, in our view, inherently woven into the MDGs. Proceeding from this premise, Mongolia was the first country to adopt, in 2005, its own ninth MDG, on strengthening human rights, fostering democratic governance and zero tolerance to corruption.

We believe in international cooperation and support for democratization efforts. In this regard, Mongolia applauds the increased role of the United Nations in fostering democracy and good governance. The United Nations Democracy Fund is a notable example and Mongolia is proud to serve on its Advisory Board. The United Nations has also been an important stakeholder in the success of the new or restored democracies process.

Over the past nearly five decades of Mongolia's membership in the United Nations, our multifaceted cooperation has made a valuable contribution to our development. I am pleased to underscore that this received a considerable boost from the official visit to Mongolia of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last July. We will closely work with the United Nations to ensure effective follow-up to the visit.

In conclusion, I reiterate Mongolia's strong resolve to continue its active participation in multilateral cooperation. We will spare no effort to ensure that the world Organization remains a centre for coordination of the efforts of the community of nations towards peace and development in the years to come.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Mongolia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cameroon.

Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Biya (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by extending my congratulations to Mr. Ali Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this sixty-fourth session and by wishing him every success in the execution of his term of office. Allow me also to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless work and for the remarkable devotion that he has demonstrated at the helm of our Organization.

Like each year, we are asked during this session to look at the state of the world, to consider together the current problems and to recommend appropriate solutions to them. In that regard, as we know, the international community remains under the impact of a global financial and economic crisis that has spared no country.

The extraordinary mobilization that it has aroused reflects its scope and extent, as well as the gravity of the threat that it poses to the stability of the global economy. We must welcome that strong mobilization, led by the major industrialized countries. It was prompt, resolute and consistent. Without doubt, it has demonstrated the international community's capacity to respond fully when it is driven and underpinned by real political resolve.

That is certainly a good example of solidarity, the kind of international solidarity that we seek and that we would like also to see in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in our common concern to narrow the gap between the North and the South, and in our daily struggle against poverty, hunger and pandemics.

In other words, if we have been able to mobilize ourselves so vigorously to contain the effects of the financial crisis, we can do the same to address the other challenges confronting us, namely the poverty and underdevelopment in which so many human beings throughout the world still live. For, while the crisis has spared no continent, there is no doubt that its effects vary depending on the country, region and level of development.

Africa, in particular, which in no way contributed to the unleashing of the crisis, today, paradoxically, finds itself among the worst affected victims. Among the most alarming effects, we therefore condemn the decrease in remittances to our countries; the severe drop in the prices of our products; the marked fall in investment; worsening budget deficits; and the slowdown in economic activity — all of which, among other things, also have severe social consequences, such as a rise in unemployment. Furthermore, there is reason to fear that the continuation of the crisis will only increase the debt of developing countries.

We find ourselves facing new difficulties just as we are emerging from lengthy years of economic recovery efforts under rigorous structural adjustment programmes, resolutely implemented by our States in cooperation with the international financial institutions. Neither our efforts nor our sacrifices have been in vain, and we believe that our gains, which are the fruit of the commendable efforts of our peoples, must unquestionably be preserved and supported.

The President took the Chair.

That is why we believe that, faced with the harmful effects of the crisis, it is important that we all work together towards a global, coordinated and significant response for the benefit of the weakest economies. In our view, that response should lead to the provision of substantial financial resources free, as far as possible, of conditionality and aimed at mitigating or even compensating for the consequences of a crisis that we could not avert.

Without such support, our developing countries run the risk of seeing their economic activity decrease

and the signs of the revival that they could reasonably hope for disappear. It is evident that, over and above development and improved living conditions, the peace and stability of our countries depend on it. That also holds true for international peace and security, inasmuch as the numerous problems confronting the world today — be it, for example, illegal immigration or trafficking of every kind — arise partly from a real lack of cooperation and solidarity, and thus call for greater justice in international relations.

In that connection, I welcome the fortuitous decision taken in London in April by the Group of 20 to recommend that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) support the weakest economies through more and softer loans, possibly with less conditionality. Moreover, in that context, my country, Cameroon, benefited from substantial financial support from the IMF under the Exogenous Shocks Facility. I welcome that support, and take this opportunity to thank International Monetary Fund officials. That timely support will strengthen the anticyclical measures that we have adopted at the national and subregional levels, fully aware that foreign aid is merely a buttress that should not replace our own efforts.

Accordingly, in Cameroon, we have, inter alia, strengthened the productive sectors and taken action to reduce the prices of basic commodities and improve the business climate. In the subregion, member countries of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community have agreed to adopt tax incentives and to establish a support fund for the sectors most affected by the crisis. Thus, while welcoming assistance from the international community, we are aware that it can bear fruit only if based on stringent management and good governance centred on the primacy of the public interest.

Moreover, it was in that spirit that a few years back I recommended from this rostrum the establishment within the United Nations of a global ethics committee, for it is a combination of moral drift and serious ethical deviations that is at the root of the current global financial crisis. We trust that, in the near future, we will surmount the crisis through collective awareness and mobilization.

However, alongside with the financial and economic crisis, we are concerned about other important matters. The food crisis is still ravaging many developing countries. The poverty reduction struggle is far from being won. Global peace and security are still threatened worldwide, particularly in Africa. Climate change is each day becoming increasingly worrisome, with visible consequences in every country.

Regarding climate change in particular, Africa, like other continents, has been hard hit despite its low level of greenhouse gas emissions. Global warming, its most salient feature, affects many socio-economic sectors, including energy, health, agriculture, livestock production, ecosystems and rapid desertification. In this regard, the spectacular drying up of Lake Chad, the surface of which has shrunk from 26,000 square kilometres in the 1960s to 1,500 square kilometres today, clearly requires significant collective action of the Central African States which, in our opinion, needs strong support from the international community. One thing is certain: African countries are individually and collectively pulling their full weight in the activity necessary at the national, subregional and global levels to provide concrete solutions to the challenge of climate change.

Such participation is significant. In Cameroon, it has taken the form of numerous actions, including the establishment of a national environmental management plan and the adoption at the subregional level of a convergence plan for the sustainable management of the Congo basin forest which, we are all aware, is the world's second largest.

The implementation of all these measures is very costly, especially in terms of acquiring adapted technologies, and requires our people to accept huge sacrifices. Furthermore, without denying the fact that the fate and future of the planet are everyone's business, it seems legitimate, in my opinion, to ask that the peoples of Africa be duly compensated by the international community for their efforts and sacrifices. In this regard, we hope that the Copenhagen climate conference scheduled for December will provide satisfactory answers to the particular case of Africa.

Regarding world peace and security, we continue to deplore the persistence of numerous conflicts or hotbeds of tension, despite significant progress towards a return to calm. I refer to the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur and Somalia, among others. Cameroon is playing an active role, including by dispatching Cameroonian contingents, in

the efforts to find lasting solutions to these conflicts, which have lasted too long.

In this respect, I wish to hail the role of the United Nations, which is making tireless efforts to stabilize all these situations. However, if it is to be more effective, the United Nations requires commensurate human, financial and material resources. Furthermore, the United Nations should be able to reflect the common will of all its Members, large and small, in order to ensure its effectiveness and credibility. It must more clearly assert and further strengthen its role as the crucible par excellence of multilateralism, that is, a forum for the exchange of ideas, solidarity, equity and equality where all the voices and opinions of developed and developing countries alike are expressed and taken into account.

These values go hand in hand with the dialogue of civilizations proposed for our consideration at this session. Such a dialogue should not ignore differences, but rather promote diversity so as to foster knowledge and mutual understanding among peoples. From this perspective, the dialogue of civilizations or cultures advocates tolerance and mutual respect and rejects all forms of fanaticism that threaten international peace and security.

That is the dual role that the United Nations, a proving ground for multilateralism and crucible of the dialogue of civilizations, must assume if it seeks to embody the noblest and deepest aspirations of humankind and satisfy our peoples' expectations with comprehensive and relevant solutions.

But the question is, how can the United Nations fulfil this role if it does not adapt to the current trends and changes in international relations? That is the purpose of the recommendations we have been making for the reform of the Security Council, the revitalization of the General Assembly and the strengthening of the means of action of the Secretary-General. We therefore need to fast-track the overhaul of an Organization that, through its universal nature, symbolizes our common destiny and seeks to be our common abode. For only a renewed United Nations that is more democratic, more credible and more efficient will be able to inspire peoples' hopes and trust.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Cameroon for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Mr. Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Nguyen Minh Triet (*spoke in Vietnamese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I believe that with your rich experience, you will lead the Assembly at this session to great success. Viet Nam commends you, Sir, for the theme you proposed for this high-level general debate, namely, effective responses to global crises — strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development.

I further wish to express our high appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his contributions to the work of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

The year since the Assembly's sixty-third session has not been a long span of time, yet it has been characterized by the many challenges it brought to the entire international community. Every part of the world has suffered from the negative and far-reaching impacts of the global financial crisis and economic downturn. That further aggravates the challenges in terms of food security, energy security and climate change facing developing countries in particular. In the meantime, tension and conflicts persist in various regions, and the threats of the proliferation of weapons

of mass destruction and of international terrorism continue to demand effective responses.

Because of all this, the past year has also witnessed enormous efforts on the part of the international community, both in thinking and in action, not only to address the immediate problems but also to create a more sustainable foundation for common peace and prosperity. In due course, nations have been able to draw valuable lessons on governance over domestic development and to gain a fuller understanding of the meaning of multilateral cooperation. It is evident that no single country could respond to the financial and economic crisis and to the series of current global challenges. It is equally evident that policies and measures of imposition and unilateral use of force to address international security and political issues would only result in more tension, confrontation and impasse.

Given the many difficulties at the present time, we are encouraged by recent positive — although not solid — signals from the world economy. The first summit of the Security Council on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament has highlighted the question of disarmament on the international agenda. Viet Nam recognizes the active contributions of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in the furtherance of discussions on and direct support for the implementation of concrete measures in relation to issues of international concern. In this connection, Viet Nam hopes that this Assembly will focus its deliberations on the following issues.

Respect for the fundamental principles of international law and the United Nations Charter in international relations is the determining factor for peace and security and a prerequisite for all the activities undertaken by the international community. On that basis, the United Nations should continue to make active contributions to easing tension and peacefully resolving outstanding disputes and conflicts, including those relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran.

It is Viet Nam's hope that early progress will be made in the negotiations for a peaceful, comprehensive, just and lasting solution in the Middle East on the basis of ensuring the fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people and the legitimate interests of all parties concerned. We fully support the national reconciliation and reconstruction process in Afghanistan and Iraq and strongly condemn terrorist acts against civilians in those countries and in other places in the world. We oppose the unilateral use of economic sanctions against developing countries and support the General Assembly resolutions on the necessity of immediately ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

An effective and comprehensive response to today's economic and financial crisis is the top concern of the international community. In the immediate term, that includes urgent measures to curb the pace of the downturn, encourage an early recovery of the world economy and minimize the negative impacts of the crisis, particularly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries.

In the long run, the response will embrace considerations of development paradigms suitable for individual nations and reforms of the international system of economic relations, which has for quite a while shown many irrationalities. It is also imperative to promote the role of the United Nations in designing international strategies and mechanisms to address the energy and food crisis, pandemics and climate change, including issues to be discussed at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen this December.

The United Nations reform process should also continue to meet the emerging, complex requirements. Viet Nam shares the common view that reform should be undertaken in all United Nations agencies, with Security Council reform conducted in such a way as to broaden its representation and render its operational methodology more democratic and transparent. Efforts to reform the machinery should go hand in hand with efforts to renew content and to pay due attention to the balance among the fields of activity of the United Nations. United Nations operations should also be provided with sufficient resources.

Next year, Member States will commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, while also reviewing the Organization's activities and the 10-year implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To prepare the ground for recommendations to be submitted to the leaders of Member States at the sixty-fifth session, we need to discuss what lessons can be drawn from United Nations activities in all spheres, what activities should be prioritized and what conditions are necessary for the

Organization fully to carry out its mandates and functions in the interest of all nations.

In the recent past, Viet Nam has continued to record major achievements in the process of renewal, in general, and initial positive gains in response to the impact of the global economic and financial crisis, in particular. We have also been successful in our foreign policy, which is based on openness and strives to diversify and ensure the multilateral character of our external relations in the spirit of being a friend and reliable partner of all nations and an active, constructive, cooperative and responsible member of the international community.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we have been an active participant in and an effective and responsible contributor to the maintenance of world peace and security. As a peace-loving nation, Viet Nam always strongly supports and contributes to the peaceful settlement of international disputes and conflicts, the fight against transnational crime and international terrorism, and the promotion of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As a country that experienced decades of war with devastating consequences, including the long-term effects of the Agent Orange toxic chemical, and as a country that has made important achievements in development, Viet Nam has always striven towards the effective Security Council action in supporting reconstruction efforts in countries emerging from conflict.

In its work, Viet Nam sets high store by consultation and cooperation with other members of the Security Council and the United Nations, as shown by our initiative to consult Member States on the latest annual report of the Security Council. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all Member States for their cooperation, without which Viet Nam would not have accomplished this undertaking.

In the future, Viet Nam will continue to work actively for world peace, stability, cooperation and development, thus contributing to efforts of the United Nations and the international community in accelerating the resolution of social issues and global challenges, as well as the implementation of development programmes and the Delivering as One initiative.

This session of the General Assembly is taking place at a crucial juncture. During 2009, the world has witnessed many significant changes, which have demanded corresponding policy decisions from us. I believe that only by standing shoulder to shoulder to enhance multilateral cooperation can we, as responsible leaders, meet the expectations and aspirations of our peoples and map out a path for the long-term development of the United Nations. Viet Nam will always be a supportive, active and responsible participant in this noble mission.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the High Transitional Authority of the Republic of Madagascar

The President: The General Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the High Transitional Authority of the Republic of Madagascar.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on a point of order.

Mr. Mwamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), comprising Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Comoros associates itself with the present motion on a point of order.

Under rule 71 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, SADC would like to express its strong protest at the decision to invite Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina to take the floor during the general debate of the Assembly and to invite the Republic of Madagascar to participate in the work of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

With respect to Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, I should like to remind the Assembly of the decision of the heads of State and Government of SADC, who met at a summit in Kinshasa on 8 September 2009. They, first, noted with concern the attempt to damage the agreements signed by all of the Malagasy political movements in Maputo on 9 August 2009. Secondly, they rejected and condemned in strong terms any unilateral decision which would violate the spirit of the Maputo Accords. The heads of State and Government also reiterated their decision to suspend Madagascar from SADC until constitutional order is restored in the country. Thirdly, they further reiterated their support for the ongoing political dialogue in Madagascar and urged all political actors to fully respect the Maputo Accords.

SADC is making efforts to re-establish constitutional order in that country. To achieve this end, it has placed its full trust in His Excellency President Joaquim Chissano, an eminent figure and mediator for political dialogue in Madagascar.

With respect to the Republic of Madagascar as a country, I should like to recall that in March 2009, SADC decided not to recognize the self-proclaimed Malagasy Government. SADC rather began a mediation process aimed at returning constitutional order to the country. As long as that constitutional order is not re-established, SADC will never recognize the current Government of Madagascar.

For the same reasons that motivated SADC's position, the African Union, which is chaired by your country, Mr. President, has suspended Madagascar from participation in the work of the African Union since March 2009. This was done in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Union's Constitutive Act, which condemn and reject anti-constitutional changes of government. The African Union therefore called on the international community as a whole to support the application of this decision. It called for a return to constitutional legality by means of subjecting the leaders of Madagascar, including Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, who is present here, to sanctions. Moreover, during its most recent summit, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, the Non-Aligned Movement refused to give the floor to Madagascar.

Madagascar is represented at this session of the Assembly by persons who are without standing, who gained power through a coup. SADC therefore calls on the Credentials Committee to meet at the earliest opportunity and take a decision on this matter.

SADC calls on all members of the General Assembly who share our values to provide us their invaluable support. We ask them to take a stand immediately on the procedural motion which aims to prevent the Malagasy delegation led by Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina from participating in the general debate at the sixty-fourth session of the Assembly. But if the floor is nonetheless given to him, we would like to urge all Member States to continue to manifest their support for us by rising and exiting the room.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Assembly of the following. I was contacted yesterday by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), who requested me to prohibit Mr. Rajoelina from taking the floor. A representative of the Legal Counsel was present at that meeting. The response of the representative of the Legal Counsel was that as President I could defer giving Mr. Rajoelina the floor for a time, but could not prohibit him from taking the floor altogether.

There was certainly no contact with SADC. SADC did not contact the Secretariat in advance to draw attention to the fact that Mr. Rajoelina was not recognized by their organization. Because the African Union had taken a decision to freeze Madagascar's membership and had not endorsed either the previous regime or the new regime, Madagascar's seat in the African Union had remained empty.

Following this discussion, there was a decision, and my brothers from SADC proposed a solution: to defer Mr. Rajoelina's statement to the end of the list of speakers who are at the heads of State level, and that, before he took the floor, the Chairperson of SADC, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or someone else, would raise a point of order with respect to this subject. That is the agreement we came to.

In the light of this, I had three meetings with Mr. Rajoelina, and for my part I tried to convince him to distribute the text of his address and perhaps not to take the floor, because I did not want there to be any split among Africans or for African subjects to be dealt with by others. A contact group was duly established. The African Union supported SADC. The group has met regularly and tried to find a solution to this

problem by inviting the concerned parties to meet and agree on a solution. We did the same thing with respect to both Mauritania and Guinea.

The position of the African Union with respect to military coups is clear: we automatically freeze any regime that comes to power through a military coup. But in the past we did not contact the United Nations to suggest that it follow a similar course of action: directly prohibiting any delegation. Guinea is still present with us, and Mauritania was with us at the time when Africa had stopped its contact with that country.

My brothers from SADC, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia requested in an unsigned letter to the President of the General Assembly that the Credentials Committee meet today, 25 September. I have been informed by the Secretariat that the Credentials Committee may meet tomorrow to take a decision on this request. In accordance with the practice followed in the United Nations, when the Assembly is meeting for the general debate, it usually does not consider other subjects. That means that the General Assembly may not meet upon submission of the report of the Credentials Committee unless this occurred after the end of the general debate.

Thus, any recommendation, be it positive or negative, by the Credentials Committee would be presented for discussion in the General Assembly only following the general debate. The decision to be taken by the General Assembly will be carried out with respect to Madagascar as a delegation as well as Madagascar's presence within the United Nations for the time being. That is the legal situation at the present moment.

The Office of Legal Affairs has made a recommendation. Let me read out the notes submitted to me by the Legal Counsel of the United Nations:

(*spoke in English*)

> "During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the rules of procedure."

The notes then make reference to rules 29 and 35 of the rules of procedure. There are a number of other references here as well.

Following rule 29 of the rules of the procedure, it is my understanding that His Excellency Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina may be given the floor. That is also my ruling. If any Member State wishes to appeal that ruling, then they should indicate that now and it will be put to the vote.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Mwamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I had invoked rule 71 of the same document, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I have taken note of your decision, Mr. President, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has taken note of your decision. SADC continues to believe, for the reasons that we outlined, that the delegation led by Mr. Rajoelina should not participate in the general debate.

Also, in accordance with rule 71 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we appeal your decision and ask that our motion to prevent the delegation of Madagascar led by Mr. Rajoelina from participating in the general debate be put to the vote. I invite members of SADC and those who support us to speak out if you, Mr. President, maintain your intention to give the floor to Mr. Rajoelina. This approach is in line with the rules of procedure.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau on a point of order.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): I should like to say with great emphasis that, without prejudice to the arguments presented by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I was astonished to hear rule 71 be invoked. What is the matter we are discussing here? Is the representation of Madagascar on the agenda? That is the question I pose. Rule 71 is very clear. Rule 71 stipulates that, I should like to recall, it comes into play "During the discussion of any matter". Is the matter the representation of Madagascar on the agenda? Are we now considering the question of the representation of Madagascar? That is the first question that needs to be dealt with before any decision is taken.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I think the situation is clear. We are presented with a problem. I have explained our position very clearly. There has been a divergence of views, and we are now faced with a situation.

The United Nations invited the representative of Madagascar. The Legal Counsel holds the view that the delegation of Madagascar should be given the floor, and I am of the view that what the Legal Counsel has suggested is the preferable course of action. We are awaiting the view of the Credentials Committee. The General Assembly will continue its work on this when it has received the recommendation of that Committee. But for the time being, we must give the speaker the opportunity to proceed with his address.

I shall now put to the vote the question of whether or not Mr. Rajoelina should proceed with his address, now that we have heard the position of the Southern African Development Community.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): The Assembly is now voting on the ruling by the President to give the floor to the representative of Madagascar.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Jamaica on a point of order.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): Many of us were waiting to hear exactly how the motion would be put. There is usually a pause, when the motion is put very clearly, so that we know what we are voting for, against or abstaining from. And I am afraid that my delegation was waiting for the Secretariat to pause and repeat what the motion was. I am not sure what it is that we are voting on. I am totally confused, and I note that many delegations have not yet voted.

The President: As the representative of the Secretariat said, there is a challenge to the ruling by the President to give the floor to the representative of Madagascar.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Denmark, Ecuador, Madagascar, Malaysia.

Against:

Angola, Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Seychelles, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mali, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu.

The ruling of the President was rejected by 23 votes to 4, with 6 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Ecuador advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against.]

The President: The matter is now clear. The majority is silent.

I give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation was awaiting clarification from the Secretariat with regard to the question that was put to us. Were delegations asked to cast a vote on your decision or were they asked to decide on the proposal to oppose your decision, as put forward by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on behalf of the Southern African Development Community? When this matter has been clarified, I think Member States will be in a better position to decide for one of these two options. I would ask you, Mr. President, please to tell us exactly what we are to decide upon or upon what we have actually missed the opportunity to give our opinion.

The President: The ruling of the President was based on a recommendation from the Secretariat Legal Counsel.

Members of the Assembly must pronounce themselves on what we are going to do: are we going to start again, or are we going to accept the vote? The legal officer will consult his Chief and come back to us, and that will take some time.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Mwamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): All of us present in this Hall are jurists. The vote was very clear. There were 23 votes cast against your proposal. That means that there are 23 countries that reject Madagascar taking the floor. There are only four countries that accept that Madagascar should take the floor. And six countries abstained. The vote has ended, so let us accept the

conclusion of the vote: Mr. Rajoelina may not speak, since the majority has expressed its will that he not speak.

The President: I agree with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I think the decision has been made. I think we will now close this discussion for today.

The meeting was suspended at 6 p.m. and resumed at 6.05 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Ramdien Sardjoe, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Ramdien Sardjoe, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Ramdien Sardjoe, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Sardjoe (Suriname): On behalf of my delegation I congratulate Mr. Ali Treki on his election as President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I am sure that his wisdom and experience will guide us as we address the challenges on the global agenda. I would like to pay tribute to the important work of your predecessor Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann. He led the Assembly's sixty-third session through complex discussions and extensive investigations in a spirit of responsibility and good faith. I also take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General and his staff for their continued dedication in overseeing the ongoing efforts for improving the working methods of the Organization and its interaction with Member States.

The world continues to face many challenges, both traditional and new. Whilst traditional challenges to international peace and security persist, we also have to cope with non-traditional threats such as pervasive poverty, deadly diseases, increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters and environmental degradation. Added to those challenges are the energy, food, financial and economic crises, all of which are hampering the realization of the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015.

Our growing interdependence in today's world only strengthens the understanding that current challenges transcend national borders and therefore require concerted action and responses from the international community. The United Nations therefore remains the central forum for addressing global issues, and we continue to advocate effective multilateralism not as an option but as a necessity.

In this regard we deem it indispensable for the United Nations to continue its reform efforts. This should include meaningful reform of the Security Council, to make it more effective and responsive to today's challenging world. Of equal importance is strengthened cooperation within and between regional groups. We should continue to promote and pursue intensified channels of political dialogue between regional groups in reaffirming our shared commitment to multilateralism.

In this spirit, my country participates in regional and interregional endeavours to strengthen political, economic, cultural and social cooperation and integration. I would like to highlight the importance of the United Nations as an effective agent in advancing multilateralism and emphasize the need for it to strengthen its role of consultation and coordination with regional organizations.

The urgency of the threat posed by climate change requires the same degree of multilateral engagement as has been demonstrated in areas ranging from the fight against the uncontrolled spread of illicit small arms and light weapons, the fight against international terrorism and the effort to control HIV/AIDS, on the one hand, and peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the advancement of women and the protection of human rights, on the other.

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for convening the recent Summit on Climate Change to garner the necessary political support to "seal the deal" in Copenhagen. Suriname expects an agreement in Copenhagen with ambitious mitigation and adaptation targets. We expect the commitments necessary to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in appropriate quantities and to support adaptation in developing countries. Countries that are historically

responsible for the current emissions of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere should take the lead in this area.

Mr. Shaheed (Maldives), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In the spirit of common but differentiated responsibilities, we look forward to appropriate mitigation efforts by developing countries. As a high-forest low-deforestation (HFLD) country, Suriname will continue with its efforts to manage its forests sustainably. In this way we aim to keep and improve the climate-stabilizing capacity of our standing forests. We attach great importance to the establishment of a future forest carbon-mitigation regime providing positive incentives to HFLD countries. In this regard we call your attention to the report of the Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). This report estimates that, if financing of €15 billion to €25 billion is available for the 2010-2015 period, a 25 per cent reduction in annual global deforestation rates will be achievable by 2015. In this regard we call upon institutions and fellow Member States to support United Nations REDD+ efforts in recognition of the beneficial potential of tropical forests in mitigating climate change.

Suriname has emphasized its support for the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace in various international forums, especially through the full implementation of the Global Agenda and Programme of Action for Dialogue among Civilizations, as well as the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (resolutions 56/6 and 53/243, respectively).

Our democracy serves as an illustration of our quest for peace, security and development. Various ethnic groups with different multicultural backgrounds and religious traditions have come a long way in coexisting and cooperating in a harmonious and peaceful way. This engagement is reflected in the political representation of our administration. It is within this atmosphere of democratic values, of high levels of religious and ethnic tolerance, that we are building a society that can prosper and engage with the region and the world beyond. In order to achieve international peace, security and development, cooperation should be based upon constructive and respectful dialogue. This dialogue should be guided by a spirit of tolerance, acceptance and trust among religions, peoples and cultures. Only with mutual trust and understanding will we be able to overcome international tensions.

The Secretary-General recently emphasized the importance of education for development. Education has always been the foundation of economic opportunity and prosperity. Knowledge and advanced skills are critical tools for enhancing every country's economic potential, growth and standard of living. This is why we have to join our efforts to improve the capacity of countries to adopt, disseminate and maximize technological advances. Improved international cooperation aimed at creating better educational systems will help developing countries progress faster towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those related to all levels of education, health and gender equality.

The promotion and protection of human rights are among the most effective strategies for eliminating inequalities between social groups and within and between countries, and Suriname therefore remains committed to the promotion and protection of all human rights.

With regard to what is called the supreme international crime — namely, the crime of aggression — Suriname expresses the hope that a decision on the elements of crime will be taken very soon. The upcoming Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to be held in Uganda next year, should therefore address this issue seriously.

For more than 60 years the United Nations has been able to build confidence and understanding between Member States and help keep global peace. My delegation reiterates its commitment to development, respect for human rights and international peace and security. We will continue to engage in constructive dialogue aimed at contributing to a better future for all.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ramdien Sardjoe, Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Joseph Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia.

Mr. Joseph Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Joseph Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Boakai (Liberia): My delegation and I are honoured, for the second time, to address the General Assembly on behalf of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Government and people of Liberia. We congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki and his country, the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on his election as President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We are convinced that, as a consummate diplomat, Mr. Treki will bring his wealth of experience into play as we tackle the complex issues on the current session's agenda, while entertaining hopes for a resounding success. In this context, my delegation and I assure the President of our full cooperation.

Permit me, therefore, to seize the opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to the preceding President, His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of the Republic of Nicaragua, for the very able and effective manner in which he steered the affairs of the Assembly's sixty-third session. His sound and shrewd leadership was critical in steadying the turbulence occasioned by the severe global economic and financial crisis. Likewise, we commend the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, a visionary statesman, for the unfaltering efforts with which he continues to administer the affairs of this Organization. His renewed dynamism and sense of purpose serve as an impetus to our collective aspirations for the attainment of global peace, security and development.

Liberia continues to make steady progress under the excellent, indefatigable leadership of Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Since her inauguration in January 2006 as the first democratically elected woman head of State of an African country, the Government has undertaken a number of important initiatives aimed at enhancing national dialogue and reconciliation.

On 30 June 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission submitted an unedited report, which did not gain the unanimous consent of the Commission, since two members issued dissenting views. Nonetheless, since its release the report has spurred national debate, and the President has committed herself to working with all stakeholders towards implementation of the recommendations, which must be in consonance with the Commission's mandate, the wishes of the Liberian people and the laws of our country.

In order to protect the fundamental rights of the Liberian people, the President has also nominated the members of the Independent Human Rights Commission, which will have the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. Under the Liberian Constitution, the nominees must meet the consent of the Liberian Senate, and that process is currently under way. We have also established the Land Commission, and its Commissioners have been appointed to address the explosive issues of land disputes and the need for land reform.

We note with satisfaction the achievement of the national disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme, carried out in conjunction with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). That programme was successfully concluded in July of this year. However, high unemployment, especially among the youth, remains a major challenge.

Liberia is pleased with the progress being made in the reconstitution of its armed forces, which includes the training of the 2,000-strong army with the assistance of our development partners, particularly the United States of America. We continue to encourage gender sensitivity in this important area of our national endeavours, considering that at present there are only 58 women in the new force.

Improvements have also been registered in the performance of the reorganized Liberia National Police force, with the establishment of an emergency unit. The police, however, continue to face difficulties in achieving full operational capability in the areas of infrastructure, equipment, logistics and other requirements. Two weeks ago, successful partnership consultations were held at United Nations Headquarters here in New York on the strategic plan

for the Liberia National Police. The responses of our partners, especially India, were encouraging. The objective of the strategic plan is to introduce an integrated programme that would ensure a consistent doctrine and training philosophy to enhance continuity. A similar strategic plan is also required for the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in border control.

We are pleased to report that Liberia has continued to make significant strides in the administration of justice and rule of law, in spite of daunting obstacles. We have established a special sexual and gender-based violent crimes court, which has begun hearing cases and encouraging victims to come forth and report on those crimes in the spirit of confidentiality and justice. Concomitantly, the Government has further adopted several gender-sensitive policies and frameworks in pursuance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

Post-conflict reconstruction and development require all Liberians to participate in the ongoing recovery and sustainable development efforts. The Government is therefore promoting and encouraging women's involvement at the leadership level and in all other spectrums of society, with emphasis on the education of the girl child.

In this connection, I wish to refer to the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security, which was co-convened by the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the President of Finland, Her Excellency Madam Tarja Halonen, in Monrovia on 7 and 8 March 2009. At that event, the Monrovia Declaration was adopted, calling for action on resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and on climate change and gender. We want to thank all our partners and friends of the international community, including the institutions of the United Nations system and UNMIL, who contributed to the success of the programme.

In that regard, we reaffirm that resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security recognizes that women, as civilians in conflict situations, are not only victims but also powerful agents for peace and the security for their communities.

We also recognize that Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) is an important component of resolution 1325 (2000) with regard to rape and sexual violence against women and girls. Therefore, we recommend that the Secretary-General appoint a special envoy on women, peace and security who would galvanize Member States to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and ensure that the path towards its tenth anniversary is well prepared in a coherent manner.

As a follow-up to the Monrovia extraordinary meeting, a side event to this sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly was jointly hosted yesterday by those two exemplary women leaders, here at United Nations Headquarters, to focus on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and climate change. In commending them for their excellent work, we join in their appeal to all Member States, Governments and non-governmental organizations to support the Monrovia Declaration. Liberia wishes to thank all the participants at that historic event for renewing their support of the Government of Liberia and for reform of the United Nations system, including the urgent need for gender equality in its organs and related agencies.

Liberia's economic revitalization is shaping up to become a post-conflict success story, due to the combination of the disciplined leadership and prudent policies of Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and the very constructive partnership with the international community. We remain cognizant of the fact that no amount of foreign assistance can transform a nation in the absence of sound moral leadership and technical competencies and of the commitment to improve the well-being of its citizens. It is out of this realization that we formulated the Government's poverty reduction strategy and have cultivated a strategic partnership with friendly countries and organizations within the international community.

The country experienced 7 per cent growth in 2008 and is expected to register 5 per cent this year, largely as a result of the negative impact of the global economic meltdown on demand for our major commodities and decreased capital inflows. National revenue collection rose by 25 per cent last year. We have improved our business and investment climate by establishing the "One Stop Shop" concept to spur private sector growth and create jobs.

We have rehabilitated a total of 674 miles of primary and secondary roads to link communities that were isolated from the central administration as a result of the 14-year civil crisis. A robust and comprehensive

civil service reform strategy has been instituted as a critical component of the public sector reform. Moreover, the President has promulgated a policy of mandatory free and compulsory primary education, with a special emphasis on girls, who are often victims of institutionalized bias and abuse.

We have undertaken several economic reform initiatives and have set up the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to create a transparent and predictable business and investment climate as well as to encourage greater foreign direct investment.

Liberia has also made noticeable progress towards reaching the targets for relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Qualifying under this process will open up the country to borrowing on the international financial markets and accepting loans.

While Liberia has made and continues to make impressive progress towards consolidating peace, the gains remain fragile. In post-conflict situations such as ours, stability is linked to development. Weak institutional capacity in the area of the rule of law, coupled with the absence of employment opportunities, especially for the youth, continue to threaten sustained progress.

As we expect to hold general elections in 2011, successful conduct of these undertakings will set the nation firmly on the path of stability and democracy. It is therefore envisioned that continued, sustainable socio-economic development will serve as the catalyst for a smooth electoral process.

The Mano River Union countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire continue to host significant numbers of each other's refugees in the subregion. For instance, more than 65,000 Liberian refugees are reportedly spread throughout West Africa, posing humanitarian challenges that require urgent action for cross-border movements. This is why we continue to urge the fast-tracking and relaxation of the stringent conditions for development assistance, if Liberia is to truly remain a model for post-conflict reconstruction and democracy.

In this connection, Liberia requires the empathy and support of the international community for its young democracy as it improves the human rights situation, transparency, anti-corruption and good governance, which are important priorities of the Government.

In this vein, we wish to express the heartfelt gratitude of the Government and people of Liberia to the Security Council for extending the mandate of UNMIL for another year and further requesting it to provide a conducive security environment for the holding of general and presidential elections in 2011. The crucial nature of this democratic transition cannot be overemphasized as we commend the gallant men and women of UNMIL for their courageous and sacrificial services in keeping the peace.

The issue of cross-border movement mentioned above demonstrates that the security and stability of the countries of the Mano River Union subregion are inextricably linked and that progress in one country cannot be divorced from progress in any one of the member States. Elections are soon to be held in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. As Chair of the Mano River Union and a member of the International Contact Group on Guinea, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is urging the United Nations and the international community to stay constructively engaged with Guinea while urging adherence to the original agreement so as to ensure a smooth transition to democratic rule in that country.

Cross-border movements among the Mano River Union countries have become more complex and problematic due to the growing number of cases involving illicit drug trafficking, human trafficking and other organized transnational crime in the West African subregion and beyond. These problems necessitate the urgent need for collective international action to tackle these criminal activities, which are a menace to regional peace and security.

Liberia supports the decision of the leaders of the Southern African Development Community on the lifting of United Nations sanctions against Zimbabwe. We are encouraged that the power-sharing agreement between the parties continues to hold as the country tries to recover.

As regards Somalia, we note with regret the continuing deterioration of the situation in that country. In view of the unfortunate state of affairs there, Liberia calls for renewed commitment by the international community to provide logistical and financial support to the African Union peacekeeping initiatives to restore peace in that country. Liberia, as a beneficiary of

peacekeeping operations, registers its strong condemnation of the recent barbaric killings of 17 African Union peacekeepers in Somalia.

On Darfur, we are heartened by the expressed willingness of all the parties to end armed hostilities and to find a political solution to the problem that will ensure lasting peace for all people in that region.

Liberia welcomes the just-ended Summit on Climate Change convened by the Secretary-General. We firmly believe that urgent action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to help all Member States, particularly developing countries, adequately respond to the harmful effects of this global phenomenon.

Liberia continues to join in the call for a democratic Security Council that reflects the realities of the twenty-first century. The world today is far different from and more complex than that of the 1940s, when this Organization came into being.

Liberia supports peacekeeping operations to put out the flames of war. However, we wish to underscore the benefits of establishing an early warning mechanism that will deal with potentially explosive situations before they escalate into full blown conflagrations that present only ghastly choices.

Additionally, it is important that the international community provides special assistance and dispensation to post-conflict countries to shield them from shocks in the worldwide system, such as the current global financial crisis. These upsets often have the effect of reversing the gains made in restoring peace to countries emerging from conflict.

That is why Liberia welcomes the empathy and support of the international community in rebuilding its institutions destroyed by protracted civil conflict. The current global financial crisis is impregnated with the potential to undermine donor support to our national renewal agenda, thus threatening much needed foreign direct investment and delivery of social services.

The result of the Government's inability to provide these basic services to its people has the propensity to provide fertile ground for acts of destabilization from internal and external sources. It is cheaper to prevent these risks than to have to mobilize already diminishing resources at much higher cost, sometimes involving human lives and enormous resources, to react to them.

In conclusion, we pledge our unstinting support to your leadership and entertain the hope that together, we can advance the cause of humanity and make the world truly a better place to live.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Joseph Boakai, Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Right Honourable Raila Amollo Odinga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya.

The Right Honourable Raila Amollo Odinga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency The Right Honourable Raila Amollo Odinga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Odinga (Kenya): I should like to congratulate the President on the singular honour of having been chosen for the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I would like to assure him of my delegation's fullest support as he undertakes his momentous responsibility to unite Member States in pursuing the common goal of a more humane, secure, united and prosperous world.

There was a time recently when that elusive goal finally appeared within reach, but multiple new challenges have coalesced to render the goal even more distant. It is therefore most encouraging that the world is turning to the United Nations to find a common, global path to resolving the most intractable difficulties facing humanity. There is a clear recognition emerging that together we can all rise, but that separately, we can only sink.

There was a time when the powerful disdained this institution's ability to be a unifying player. That is now changing, and in this regard, I would like to commend the President of the United States, who holds

a very special place in the hearts of Africans, Kenyans in particular, for having on Wednesday so eloquently indicated the centrality of the United Nations in charting common solutions.

In order to better equip the United Nations for meeting these challenges, we must continue to press for reform in the Organization. The Security Council, in particular, must be enlarged and made more democratic and representative of current day reality. Part of the enlargement must include permanent, veto-bearing seats for Africa.

The world can no longer continue to marginalize a continent that is home to nearly one billion people. That is wrong in principle, but even more, it is wrong in practice. We cannot find sustainable solutions to our challenges when such a large part of humanity is given so little voice and role in that quest for peace.

The world is now acutely aware that the quest for peace begins with ensuring the survival of the planet. I would, therefore, like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for having convened the high-level meeting on climate change, which has put that issue squarely onto the world's centre stage. There is no issue that so clearly unites the population of the entire world as climate change does.

Regrettably, the far-sighted decision at the 2005 United Nations World Summit to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework for international environmental governance has not borne any fruit. This is particularly unacceptable now when climate change is indeed the most pressing challenge of our times. We therefore call for the upgrading of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, so that it can become the central environmental institution handling the numerous conventions.

We have noted with regret the emergence of multiple centres dealing with environmental issues. That dissipates their impact and sometimes even leads to contradictory actions. The United Nations Office in Nairobi should now be elevated to the same level United Nations Offices in Geneva and Vienna to enable it to provide comprehensive support to all Member States and organizations struggling to adjust to a new paradigm of a sustainable and dynamic green economy.

Without that, the lives of billions will be imperilled. Already, as the Secretary-General pointed out on Wednesday, another 100 million people may fall below the poverty line this year owing to climate change setbacks. Markets may be bouncing back, but incomes and jobs are not. These developments do not augur well for the future.

I regret to say that my own country is emblematic of the woes unleashed by years of rampant excesses in the global and local mismanagement of our environment. The melting of the famed ice caps of Mt. Kenya and nearby Mt. Kilimanjaro, the destruction of vast swathes of our once beautiful forests, the drying of fast-flowing rivers, the intensifying cycles of drought and floods, the spread of malaria to highland regions as temperatures rise — these are all consequences of human action within and outside our borders. And so the solution also must also entail action on both fronts.

The greater challenge for us, I am afraid, is the external one. We, like the rest of Africa, produce only a tiny proportion of the emissions that are rapidly warming the planet and wreaking havoc with our capacity to produce adequate amounts of food and energy and husband sustainable water supplies. Our economies are in disarray. We are victims of the richer world's acts and omissions, and therefore we need large amounts of funds in assistance and private-sector investment to reverse the course of events. The world community must agree on concrete actions in Copenhagen.

But we in Kenya are not interested in playing the blame game or waiting for international action to materialize. We have already begun to make very tough political decisions to reverse the ravages. Our immediate goal is to fully restore our largest water tower, the famed Mau Forest complex, as well as Kenya's other four water towers, and are embarking on a huge reforestation drive to plant seven billion trees, which will restore the carbon-taming sinks that once made us self-sufficient in food and energy. We are also undertaking a crash programme designed to rapidly shift energy production to green technologies that use assets in which we are naturally rich — wind and sun, but most important of all, geothermal energy, which could more than double our current energy production within the next four years.

For all of these programmes, we are mobilizing local resources, but we will need significant assistance and investment to succeed in our goal of achieving

self-sufficiency in a green way. The rich nations have recognized that their own self-interest is served in promoting such green commitments in developing countries, but the existing mechanisms through which they can support such programmes need to be refined and made more effective in quickly releasing resources.

We therefore support British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's proposal for a $100 billion facility, and at the same time urge that the $20 billion pledged by the Group of Eight (G-8) for enhanced food production be speedily mobilized and disbursed. We need immediate assistance in feeding the 10 million Kenyans who are now living in hunger and will otherwise face starvation shortly. Just last week we declared this situation a national disaster requiring $500 million to rectify, of which $250 million will be mobilized from our own resources, while we urgently appeal to our development partners to furnish the other $250 million.

Tens of thousands of livestock animals have died. This devastation is the result primarily of climate change. We have had droughts before, but they now recur much more frequently and with greater severity. One drought year is difficult enough, but the rains have now failed us for the past four consecutive seasons. I appeal to our well-wishers, who are many, to assist us in this dire emergency. To mitigate the suffering, we have carried out a massive mobilization — including of the military — in providing relief and in drilling boreholes and transporting water to areas in acute need.

I am very proud to say that despite the terrible post-election violence and the subsequent multiple reverses that made reconciliation and reconstruction even more difficult, our people have shown an extraordinary maturity and resilience in rising to unprecedented challenges. We were able to overcome the bitterness over the election with an accord that we signed with the help of the African Union and the mediation of Kofi Annan, as well as with the support of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who personally visited Kenya at the height of the crisis — for which we are deeply grateful.

Let me now turn to an area where peace does not prevail and which is a source of immense concern to the entire international community — and that is Somalia. As its immediate neighbour and with a large population of Kenyan Somalis, we have done more than any other country to assist Somalia in overcoming its divisions and conflicts. No one is more eager than we are to help defeat the forces of extremism in Somalia, which have so much sway because of the help of external elements. The continuing inflow of refugees, small arms and light weapons from Somalia is the major source of insecurity in our country.

The latest setback resulting from that insecurity is disruption through piracy against international trade in one of the busiest sea routes in the world. Despite the risks incurred by doing so, Kenya has offered facilities for the detention and prosecution of suspected pirates, as part of our international obligation to promote peace. We have also offered to host a United Nations-organized conference in Kenya on how to coordinate and more effectively deal with the scourge of piracy. In return, we ask the international community to recognize our many sacrifices and assist us in dealing with our major refugee and security burdens.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union have recommended to the United Nations Security Council that it impose a no-fly zone and a blockade of airports and seaports held by insurgents so as to prevent the influx of arms. Kenya fully supports their position. It is now incumbent upon the United Nations Security Council to take decisive action to forestall further anarchy in Somalia.

To succeed in the quest for peace in Somalia, we must recognize that the present focus primarily on the use of force has not led to any curbing of extremism. Indeed, the security and humanitarian crises are worse than ever. We must therefore take a more comprehensive approach in tackling the extremists — an approach that includes encouraging the Transitional Federal Government to much more aggressively pursue its commitment to a more inclusive political process, by bringing into the Government all forces that eschew violence. Such outreach to all moderates can succeed only with much greater international support. It is regrettable that many pledges made at the Brussels donors conference have yet to be honoured. I call upon all those who have not honoured their pledges to do so immediately.

Turning back to the global economic crisis, it is now recognized that one of its principal causes is the weakness of the international financial system. We should strengthen and promote effective multilateralism with the United Nations at the centre. We need to reform

the international financial governance institutions, so that they can prevent crises and develop more effective and equitable responses to them.

The ideals and principles of the United Nations are, today more than ever, the surest hope for a more prosperous and equitable world. Multilateralism in this globalized age is the only sure way to ensure that peace, development and unity prevail at a time when the world is riven with so many divisions. We need a genuine partnership among all nations and peoples, so that everyone feels that he or she is a critical stakeholder in national and international decision-making.

Mr. Martinez (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Finally, within democratic nations, each person's vote is equal to those of all others, regardless of their power or wealth. That is the principle that must finally be applied to the workings of the entire international system.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Raila Amollo Odinga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

The Honourable John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Key (New Zealand) (*spoke in Maori; English text provided by the delegation*): To the powers, to the voices, to the four winds: I greet you all.

(*spoke in English*)

I have addressed the Assembly in Te Reo Maori, the indigenous language of New Zealand, and I bring warm Pacific greetings from all New Zealanders.

I am deeply honoured to lead New Zealand's delegation to the General Assembly for the first time. Like every New Zealand Prime Minister since 1945, I stand here today to reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations and the United Nations Charter.

The founding Members of the United Nations gathered in San Francisco in 1945 to create this Organization out of the ashes of the most destructive war and the most debilitating depression in modern history. They believed in the larger freedom of a world where collective action might avert common crises. They believed in the rule of law, by which all States would be held to a universal standard, and in a world where all peoples, faiths and cultures could flourish. They believed in a future in which every human being would be free from want and free from fear. And they wanted an international Organization and architecture that could deliver those benefits.

New Zealand was active among those founding Members in San Francisco. And, as a small, independent and diverse country in the Pacific, New Zealand still has a stake in the United Nations — this great meeting place for all States.

I have benefited personally from efforts to secure those ideals. My family fled persecution in Europe, and I was privileged to grow up in a new world where a child of immigrants is now accorded the extraordinary privilege of leading his country and addressing this Assembly on its behalf.

We meet at a time of many challenges. With 130 heads of State and Government assembled here this week, the present session of the General Assembly represents our greatest opportunity since the 2005 World Summit to reaffirm our collective resolve. New Zealand embraces that opportunity. Today, I will focus on some of the most pressing issues demanding collective responses from us.

The crisis in the global economy continues. We must remain resolute in our efforts to stabilize the global economy in order to permit a return to sustainable growth. New Zealand welcomes the actions of the Group of 20 (G-20) over the past year. But, in commending those efforts, we call on the G-20 to heed

the voices of the world's small economies and to ensure that they are also heard in global decision-making.

Free and fair trade will be the principal engine for driving developing countries out of poverty and bringing greater prosperity to all. An essential component in our response to the global economic crisis must therefore be a balanced and ambitious conclusion to the Doha Round of world trade talks. A genuinely global agreement that reduces tariffs, eliminates export subsidies, reduces domestic subsidies and increases market access will see benefits flow to all States. At a time when all countries are suffering from the brunt of the current economic crisis, further delay is inexcusable.

As one of the world's first truly open economies, New Zealand has an unwavering commitment to trade liberalization and to the pursuit of bilateral, regional and global free trade agreements. We support the call of the Secretary-General for the immediate suspension of price controls and other agricultural trade restrictions, in order to reduce soaring food prices and help millions cope with the highest food prices in 30 years.

Therefore, I call on all those States and groupings that have broken their undertakings and reintroduced protectionist measures to reconsider. Those actions are as harmful as they are unacceptable. Agriculture, which is so important for developing countries in particular, is one of the sectors most affected.

The escalation of poverty is a result of the economic crisis. New Zealand is, naturally, proud of the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen its focus as the largest United Nations development agency on poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

For its part, New Zealand pledges to continue to increase its official development assistance, with a clear focus on the Pacific Islands region. Aid effectiveness is just as important as the quantum of aid. That is why, last month, we committed to the Cairns Compact, which will strengthen development coordination in the Pacific islands.

The major focus of the General Assembly this year must be on the challenge of climate change. Climate change demands innovation and a global response. The world cannot afford to contemplate failure at Copenhagen. Political leadership is needed, and it is on display.

At the Summit on climate change this week, the leaders of the world's three biggest economies showed their determination both to make Copenhagen a success and to take action themselves. All countries must take action that reflects our individual circumstances, responsibilities and capabilities.

For our part, New Zealand is committed to securing a durable and meaningful agreement on climate change — an agreement that is both environmentally effective and economically efficient. I have set a target for New Zealand of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10 to 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, if there is a comprehensive global agreement. That amounts to a per capita drop of 35 to 42 per cent since 1990.

New Zealand is acutely conscious that most of our greenhouse gas emissions come from livestock methane emissions, which so far no technology can reduce. At the same time we are proud of our role as a food producer to the world and the contribution we can make to assuring food security for the world's people.

Our challenge is to find a way to balance growth in agricultural production with the need to reduce emissions and reach climate change targets.

That is not just a challenge for New Zealand, but one for the world. Agricultural emissions make up 14 per cent of all emissions worldwide. As demand for food rises, so will those emissions. Yet so far the only known way to achieve emission reductions from agriculture is through reductions in output, which is not an acceptable response — not for New Zealand, and not for a growing world that seeks freedom from hunger.

A better response to this challenge must be found. In my view, the response must draw on the power and possibility of science. Just as New Zealand is proud of its agricultural producers, so are we proud of our role in agricultural research. This research has resulted in scientific and technological advances that have improved production and fed virtually millions of people.

But advancing research in the area of emission reduction requires a commitment so broad that it is beyond the capacity of any one individual country.

That is a challenge that requires collective action, and it is collective action that I call for today.

New Zealand has developed a proposal for a global alliance on the reduction of agricultural emissions. This alliance would undertake international research and investment into new technologies and practices to help reduce agriculture-related emissions and would seek to achieve greater coordination of existing efforts.

Through a global alliance we can find solutions faster, make better use of the money that is being spent around the world and encourage all countries and companies to do more. We have been delighted with the interest that our proposal has received so far, and we will continue working with others to explore the concept. Today, my call to other agricultural producers of the world is to rise to this challenge and join New Zealand in this research effort.

I now want to address some of the security crises that we confront. Yesterday I had the honour to observe the high-level Security Council meeting on disarmament and non-proliferation. As a country with a proud record of promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, I was heartened by the expressions of support for a world free of nuclear weapons. We must all take full advantage of this historic moment to advance the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We owe it to our generation and to those who follow us to move our vision for a world free from nuclear weapons forward. As a proudly nuclear-free nation and a country that has been at the forefront of that debate since the 1970s, New Zealand stands ready to play its part.

We are optimistic about the prospects for progress. Last week, New Zealand presided over the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, Austria. Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons through the implementation of safeguards under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is a fundamental pillar of the Agency's work. Next year sees the quinquennial review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

New Zealand will actively work with our New Agenda Coalition partners for a meaningful outcome at that conference to bring us closer to a truly secure world.

We will also continue to address the humanitarian harm caused by conventional weapons. We will work for a robust, action-oriented outcome later this year at the second review conference of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines.

Looking back, I am proud of the role that New Zealand was able to play in the negotiation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Government attaches priority to passing legislation to enable us to ratify this very significant treaty. New Zealand also continues to play its part in maintaining and promoting international peace and security.

Peacekeeping remains one of this Organization's most essential tasks and most solemn responsibilities to its Members. While United Nations peacekeeping has been significantly strengthened since the testing it underwent in the 1990s, the demands now being placed on it are severe.

I want to express my profound gratitude to those civilians and military personnel who place their lives at risk to support peace and live up to the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations. Ensuring that United Nations peacekeeping is as effective and responsive as possible must therefore remain one of the Organization's most urgent priorities.

The United Nations provides the legal mandate — and often the operational effectiveness — for our joint efforts to achieve and maintain peace and security. New Zealand is firmly committed to supporting United Nations peacekeeping — both its own operations and others that it has mandated, such as those in which we are involved in Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

All too often, however, the United Nations has found itself unable to respond to emerging crises. New Zealand therefore strongly supports the concept of responsibility to protect. I am pleased at the solid foundation that the General Assembly's recent debate on that responsibility has laid for its implementation.

New Zealand also strongly supports the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is a fundamental tenet of our domestic legal systems that wrongdoers must be brought to justice. The ICC is the mechanism for applying that same principle to persons accused of the most serious international crimes.

New Zealand takes very seriously its responsibilities for creating and maintaining peace and

security in its region and in the world. I am therefore pleased to confirm New Zealand's candidature for the United Nations Security Council for 2015-2016 in the elections to be held in 2014. In advancing its candidature, New Zealand does so as a State committed to upholding the international rule of law and to providing a strong and principled Pacific voice on behalf of small States like ourselves with an interest in a fairer and more secure world.

We all have a stake in a world where peace and the rule of law prevail, where all States are secure and can prosper and where all people are guaranteed the human rights and fundamental freedoms promised them in the Charter.

But we also know that solutions to the problems we collectively face do not lie with inspirational goals and promises that can be — and far too often are — quickly and quietly forgotten and ignored. Hard, pragmatic decisions must be made. Enforceable solutions must be implemented.

We know that effective, collective action is in every country's long-term, national interest. That is what New Zealand believed in 1945, and I recommit now to taking action to live up to the ideals of the United Nations Charter, here, in this great Hall, this evening.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of New Zealand for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Milo Dukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*). The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Montenegro.

The Honourable Milo Dukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Milo Dukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Dukanović (Montenegro) (*spoke in Montenegrin; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, please allow me to congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We wish him success in his work and assure him of Montenegro's unwavering support.

I would also like to thank the former President, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his endeavours and personal contribution in discharging this challenging post.

At the same time I would like to pay my tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his outstanding efforts in leading the Organization in these trying times.

As we have heard from the statements of previous distinguished speakers, given the impact of the world economic and financial crisis and related food and energy crises, climate change and the flu pandemic on the economic and social growth and development, politics and global relations, including achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals, only a coordinated and a concerted global effort can yield positive results.

Response to current challenges requires, therefore, that we pool all capacities and resources, as well as a strong political will from us all. In this, the key role belongs to the United Nations, the world's most important multilateral forum.

Montenegro, as a country that advocates the equality of peoples and nations in international relations, is fully committed to active participation in efforts to work out a global response to present-day challenges. Preserving peace and security through activities aimed at creating positive political, economic, social and cultural environments for the implementation and respect of international law, the rule of law and the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights and freedoms are the main principles and bases of the Montenegrin foreign policy priorities.

In that regard, Montenegro remains strongly committed to the fundamental principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, which imply peaceful resolution of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Strong cooperation with neighbouring countries and regional stability are the underlying principles of the foreign policy of Montenegro and a precondition for progress in its broader integration processes. Since the previous General Assembly session, we have moved to a new and more demanding phase of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. We feel particularly encouraged by the dynamic progress Montenegro has made towards membership in the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). We expect that in the near future the European Commission will issue an opinion on Montenegro's preparedness for EU membership, and we also expect an invitation to join in the NATO Membership Action Plan, which will open additional opportunities for those two integration processes to gain momentum.

Taking into consideration the strong impact of the world economic and financial crisis on overall socio-economic development, the most recent reports from the global financial markets are encouraging, indicating an end to the global crisis even earlier than expected. However, in order to ensure sustained economic development, increased aid and implementation of trade agreements and the achievement of international solidarity is imperative in addressing the needs of the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

Given that the recovery is going to be long and gradual, all countries, led by the United Nations, should be committed to the implementation of policies and measures initiated in the various international forums, including the United Nations Conference on the world economic and financial crisis and its impact on development, the G-20, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Bearing in mind the nature of the Montenegrin economy as a small and open system, we have not been able to remain immune to the turbulent global developments. In that regard, the Government of Montenegro has adopted a package of economic policy measures aimed at maintaining macroeconomic stability, improving productivity and preserving a favourable economic environment.

The harmful consequences of climate change, increasing energy consumption and growing dependence on imported fossil fuels, along with their negative impacts on the environment and standards of living, are issues causing profound concern among us all. The Summit on Climate Change held on the eve of the general debate is, in our view, a significant step forward in Member States' political support for the process of the implementation of the MDGs in this field.

We believe that both the character and the effects of climate change call for a comprehensive international response based on the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which would facilitate sustainable economic development of society in accordance with the guidelines of the 2007 Bali Action Plan.

I would like to take this opportunity to express Montenegro's strong support for the negotiation process on a new post-2012 climate framework and for calls to "seal the deal" in Copenhagen in December.

We believe that further efforts need to be made to promote a green recovery and to build up national capacities for adaptation and mitigation of the impact of climate change, while simultaneously stimulating innovation and economic growth, contributing to poverty reduction and ensuring access to sustainable energy sources.

In that regard, we underline the importance of regional cooperation, which enables us to implement adaptation and mitigation measures in a regional context, which promotes political dialogue and leads to more effective action by States in the talks within the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol frameworks.

In order to contribute to the efforts being undertaken at the national and international levels in addressing the impact of climate change on the environment and economic development and in reaching a successful deal in Copenhagen, Montenegro will organize a regional conference on climate change and sustainable development for the Mediterranean and South-East European countries in Budva, on 16 and 17 October.

The Millennium Development Goals require each and every one of us to redouble our efforts to reduce poverty, improve health and education, promote peace and human rights, and achieve sustainable development. We are aware that it is the primary responsibility of States to take measures aimed at improving the social security of the poor and vulnerable segments of society and alleviating the most

severe consequences of poverty. In this context we strongly welcome the convening of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review summit in 2010.

Montenegro strongly supports and is committed to fulfilment of the MDGs and implementation of all United Nations documents — including the Millennium Declaration — related to development issues and the special needs of Africa, as a pre-emptive action aimed at creating a safer world. As a country moving towards European integration, we welcome the European Union-Africa partnership and the efforts currently under way to find solutions to development needs and to root out poverty on the African continent.

In this regard, we support the message of the 2008 Yokohama Declaration aimed at giving momentum to current development issues, including education, health and sanitary measures within the framework of the MDGs, the development of agriculture to improve food security, measures to tackle climate change, as well as establishing and maintaining peace as a prerequisite for economic growth.

We emphasize the crucial importance of the debate on the concept of the responsibility to protect, and we fully support the activities of the Secretary-General and the assessments outlined in his latest report. We believe that an upsurge of internal conflicts and serious violations of human rights in the 1990s has spurred a discussion on the need for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which has unquestionably led to further deliberations on and analyses of the primary obligation of each State to protect its citizens from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as to consideration of the international community's responsibility in the event that countries fail to act. In this context, we underline the importance of reaching an agreement on an appropriate concept and instruments within the framework of the United Nations and international law, based on a broad consensus of all actors.

In supporting peacekeeping missions as efficient and dynamic instruments for monitoring respect of human rights and building sustainable institutions in conflict areas, we have established legal prerequisites within our security policy in order to be able to contribute our military and police troops to the United Nations peacekeeping missions, including missions to Liberia, Afghanistan and Cyprus and the European Union peace operation in Somalia.

Given the problems of the Balkan region, Montenegro attaches particular importance to a policy that addresses the needs of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and is conducting extensive activities aimed at finding lasting solutions for the refugees and IDPs from the territory of the former Yugoslavia. As part of those efforts, a renewed registration procedure supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is under way for refugees and IDPs living in Montenegro to resolve their final status, in accordance with the highest international standards and international law instruments.

In this regard we highlight the importance of a comprehensive approach and the need for the cooperation of all actors, primarily UNHCR, the European Commission and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Montenegro stresses the importance of the promotion of and the respect for international law in the development of international relations today. In this context, the rule of law and the protection of human rights have an irreplaceable role in the fight against international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and organized crime.

We are firmly convinced that only the coordinated efforts of the global community can take on international terrorism. Montenegro supports the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as measures to fight corruption, organized crime, drug trafficking and human trafficking, and we further underscore the need for cooperation among all the bodies of the United Nations system, in particular the committees of the Security Council and the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Montenegro attaches particular importance to the fulfilment of the obligations stipulated by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and it actively participates in projects of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which contribute to regional peace and stability, strengthening of the judiciary and a more efficient fight against all forms of organized crime.

In view of all of the above, it is clear that the responsibility of the United Nations is only increasing. We therefore welcome the reform process of the world Organization and hope that it will result in a more democratic and representative United Nations. We attach particular importance to strengthening the role and efficiency of the General Assembly and its main bodies, and fully support intergovernmental talks on Security Council reform. These negotiations offer an opportunity for small States to express their interests, in addition to providing a vision for an improved and more transparent functioning of the most important United Nations organ.

As the Assembly may know, this past June the United Nations Development Group identified Montenegro as a country eligible for implementation of the Delivering as One pilot initiative launched within the framework of the overall reform process aimed at improving the efficiency, coherence and coordination of United Nations development programmes on the ground. In our view, that decision recognizes Montenegro's strong commitment to United Nations standards and values and provides an endorsement of the highly successful joint efforts of the United Nations team and the Montenegrin Government.

Given the myriad of challenges and their negative effects on the environment, as well as the potential increase in social, religious and cultural tensions leading to political instability, only the coordinated and comprehensive response of all international stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, can create the preconditions for efficiently addressing the consequences of the ongoing crises. In this regard, the United Nations has a decisive role to play in coordinating efforts towards the achievement of concrete results.

Convinced of the great potential of the United Nations, if supported by the active participation of Member States, we reiterate Montenegro's commitment to building a responsible international community ready to meet the needs of all of its members.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Montenegro for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Milo Dukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, Prime Minister of the Central African Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, Prime Minister of the Central African Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, Prime Minister of the Central African Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Touadera (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): May I begin by congratulating Mr. Treki on his unanimous election to preside over the work of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. His election to that position is an honour to the entire African continent and a worthy tribute to the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, whose devotion to the African cause goes without saying.

Furthermore and on behalf of His Excellency General François Bozizé, President of the Republic, who wishes him every success in his work, I assure him of the support of the Central African delegation in achieving the full success of his lofty task this year. His demonstrated knowledge of the United Nations and of world problems will ensure the success of the present session. I also wish to congratulate Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua on his excellent contribution to the previous session in his capacity as President.

However, before delivering my assessment the state of the world in the face of the new challenges of the twenty-first century and my country's perspective on the main issues to be addressed at this session, I should also like to commend the tireless work of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who spares no effort in promoting the principles and purposes of the United Nations. To him, I once again express the deep gratitude of the people of the Central African Republic for his notable contributions with regard to the situation in the Central African Republic and his support within the framework of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In fact, in March this year, pursuant to my Government's request, a country configuration of the

Peacebuilding Commission was established under the Belgian presidency. The Commission is working together with Central African authorities to strengthen the achievements of peace and make it possible to implement the recommendations resulting from the inclusive political dialogue held from 8 to 20 December 2008, regarding in particular the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, security sector reform and the process leading up to the 2010 general elections.

My country welcomes this session because of the items on our agenda, which are true matters of global concern. Indeed, it should be recalled that we have several challenges to meet: development, peace and security, climate change and its effects, terrorism and necessary United Nations reform. The choice of theme for this debate — "Effective responses to global crises, strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development" — is inspired. In fact, the changes in the world's configuration have given rise to new challenges that can be addressed only through international cooperation. Thus, multilateralism now appears to be the only way to resolve the world's problems.

In this era of globalization and technological advances, forums for cooperation — even the most firmly established ones — must address new demands calling for appropriate and united responses.

I am grateful for the honour shown to the Central African Republic, and I should like to stress the correlation among some of the issues raised since the beginning of this general debate. With regard to the world situation, this session is being held in a particularly worrisome context. This is a critical time for addressing global political issues at all levels — a time that requires us, as nations, to seek solutions in a spirit of dialogue, cooperation and openness. The current world scene poses major challenges in the areas of peace and security, economic development and social progress, and human rights and the rule of law.

As far as crucial development issues are concerned, the world economic and financial crisis remains an unprecedented event in terms of its impact and the upheavals in the world's economic and financial systems. It requires a reorganization leading to a new world order in this area. Besides that option, however, other ways to emerge from the present crisis could be to develop production capacity, to strengthen trade capacity for the benefit of developing countries and to implement strategic partnerships among the various regions to which the Organization's Members belong.

The food crisis, which was caused by rising prices and whose harmful effects continue to keep a large part of the world in conditions of famine and abject poverty, requires that we promote the agricultural sector, industry and the utilization of mining resources. The rise in food prices has caused a significant deterioration in the terms of trade among countries in the most affected regions, including the African continent generally and, in particular, the Central African Republic. That situation could lead to greater inflationary pressure and a deteriorating balance of payments. The impact is being felt both at the macroeconomic level and in terms of household income and food security.

The contributions of regional economic communities and United Nations agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank, will be invaluable in the quest for a coordinated solution to this crisis. Agricultural development should be encouraged with a view to ensuring sustainable growth and improvements in people's means of subsistence, based on the sound management of environmental and natural resources.

Programmes and activities to promote long-term growth should, of course, be carried out in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2000, when we committed ourselves to achieving the Goals by 2015, we aroused legitimate hopes throughout the developing world. We do not have the right to dash those hopes, which would worsen the North-South fracture and further deepen the divisions within our own societies, with incalculable risks for the governance and stability of States.

A little more than nine years after the Millennium Summit, it is indisputable that significant progress has been made, but we must acknowledge that, in many countries in Africa and elsewhere, a large majority of the population lives in abject poverty. The Millennium Development Goals are the surest way to speed the progress of African peoples towards well-being. The development projects in the MDG sectors need stable,

sufficient and predictable long-term funding. We thus regard this session of the General Assembly as an opportunity to raise the awareness of all international development financing institutions, without exception, and lead them to effectively pledge to mobilize and transfer the financial resources necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Likewise, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, aimed at significantly improving the living conditions of the more than 600 million people living in those countries, is concluding and thus should be reviewed in order to address the marginalization and the new socio-economic challenges facing least developed countries.

Climate change joins the challenges confronting our world, because the economy, the environment and the way of life of every nation represented here are threatened.

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bali, Indonesia, in 2007, world leaders decided to negotiate a new agreement on climate change to succeed the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. In the Bali Road Map, States defined spheres of action and agreed to take them into account during the post-Kyoto negotiations. The working meeting of the heads of State of the G8+5 in L'Aquila on 9 July 2009 examined the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

My country is committed to the global fight against climate change, as demonstrated by its ratification of several international instruments on climate issues. I am referring to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

For the Central African Republic, the challenge of climate change relates to not only mitigation, namely reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, but also to adaptation to the harmful effects of that change. However, for vulnerable States, with a weak economy like ours, the cost of adaptation, calculated at several tens of billions of dollars a year, puts a still greater strain on our limited resources and increases poverty. This is an opportunity for me to express the wish that assistance in combating climate change not replace official development assistance.

We have not come to this sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly to point an accusing finger at the States responsible for global warming, but rather, like the brother countries of Africa, to convey a message to the leaders of the world. Africa will continue its efforts to preserve its forest ecosystems, but the rich countries must assume their responsibilities to reach concrete proposals for post-Kyoto.

We support France's proposal at the summit on climate change, held on 22 September 2009, for the establishment of a world environment organization, the implementation of the Bali Road Map through technology transfers to developing countries, and the financing of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, we strongly hope that, in Copenhagen next December, the common position of the countries of Central Africa, which share the forests of the Congo basin, will be taken into account.

Allow me here to recall that the countries of Central Africa, members of the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC), signed a declaration in Bangui on 11 September 2008 in which they call on the institutions of the United Nations system, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the high-level panel of experts to support them in their effort, inter alia, to include issues relating to the management of tropical forests in the post-Kyoto arrangements.

The forests of the Congo basin, the second largest forest system in the world, play a key role in regulating the global climate. The efforts to conserve and sustainably manage the forests of that natural space agreed to by the member countries of COMIFAC should be encouraged as part of the process of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. In Copenhagen, we must reach a fair agreement, based on win-win partnerships that enable developing countries to reconcile the preservation of natural resources with economic development.

The Central African Republic fully supports the statement made by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission at its recent special session on the consideration and resolution of conflicts in Africa, held in Tripoli, Libya, on 31 August 2009. It shares the conviction that economic growth and sustainable

development are intertwined with the status of and trends in world peace and security.

In view of the proliferation of arms of all kinds, disarmament is a pressing issue. The United Nations Disarmament Commission must promote resolutions that encourage multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, the reduction of military budgets and respect for environmental standards in the drawing up and implementation of disarmament agreements. An effort is also needed to overcome the current impasse and to achieve nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all their forms. The strategic doctrine adopted by nuclear-weapon States that justifies the use of or threat of the use of atomic weapons is as dangerous as uranium enrichment for weapons purposes and should simply be discarded.

On the other hand, a national security concept based on the promotion and development of military alliances and nuclear deterrence policies seems better suited to the ideals that we pursue. The Central African Republic welcomes the initiative of United States President Obama in convening a meeting of the Security Council on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Terrorism is the most flagrant violation of international law. It prevents people from enjoying their basic freedoms and destabilizes legitimately established Governments. For those reasons, it must not be tolerated by or associated with any religion, civilization, ethnic group or claim, however legitimate it may seem. My country resolutely condemns terrorist acts and aligns itself with the fight against terrorism being carried out by the committees established by the United Nations Security Council.

The issue of the control of conventional weapons at the regional level is all the more relevant in view of the fact that it is the most effective way to tackle the illegal proliferation of armed groups and transnational crime. The peace and security of Central Africa are hampered by that recurrent problem. Armed groups threaten the stability of the national institutions of some of our States. Along those lines, the comprehensive peace agreement signed at Libreville in neighbouring Gabon on 21 June 2008 enabled the Central African Republic to thwart an ill-intentioned plot to seize power.

However, its concern, like that of other States of Africa's Great Lakes region, such as the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, is with the criminal activities of the uprising of the so-called Lord's Resistance Army, which has become a transnational criminal organization, causing death and destruction as far as the Central African Republic. Its destructive capacity goes beyond the territory of the Republic of Uganda and is becoming a regional problem, for which an agreed solution is essential. The affected States are striving to achieve that with the limited resources that they have.

I am convinced that the Charter of the United Nations and international law continue to be essential instruments and the pillars of the preservation and maintenance of international peace and security. Representing nearly the entire international community, the United Nations has well-established international legitimacy and is the best forum for finding a lasting solution to problems of that kind.

The United Nations remains the primary and fundamental forum for addressing world issues and seeking consensus. That is why we Member States attach great importance to strengthening its role and believe that reform is necessary in order to develop its full potential. The reform must be comprehensive and cover all areas, while respecting its political nature and its intergovernmental and universal character.

However, adjustments to two organs of our Organization seem to be a priority in that reform: the Security Council and the General Assembly. The General Assembly must be invigorated by giving greater weight to its role and to its authority as the main deliberative and representative organ of the Member States. The General Assembly's prerogatives as the chief oversight body of the United Nations, even in the area of peacekeeping, must be respected.

As for reform of the Security Council, it must be directed at achieving transparency and balance within that body. Its enlargement will enable better representation of all regions in order to allow us to debate new approaches to the maintenance of international peace and security. This is an African position that has been advocated during this general debate by the Leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (see A/64/PV.3), and it is one that the Central African Republic supports. My country hopes that reform of the United Nations system will

have a positive impact on the development of multilateral cooperation in our ever-changing world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera, Prime Minister of the Central African Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Edward Nipake Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu.

The Honourable Edward Nipake Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency The Honourable Edward Nipake Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Natapei (Vanuatu): I begin by joining others in congratulating Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on assuming the noble and high responsibility of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Let me wish him well in his leadership as the United Nations makes its way through the myriad evolving challenges on the global agenda. I also take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his vision and for the initiatives that he has resolutely pursued in the interests of all humanity.

The theme of the sixty-fourth General Assembly session will serve to focus the attention of the international community on the critical importance of building partnerships for more equitable and sustainable development. My delegation shares the belief that sustainable development is the responsibility of everyone, and that its realization requires strong partnerships at all levels. I firmly believe that equity and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing goals, for it would be difficult to support peace, security and growth in any process of development that left much of humanity behind.

One of the major goals of my country's comprehensive reform programme, introduced during the mid-1990s, is to promote social equity, especially in terms of integrating the needs of our culturally diverse people and geographically remote communities into our national development priorities. I am glad to say that we are still pursuing our nationwide policy consultation processes, aimed at developing and maintaining sound policies and frameworks for delivering services to our people at the grass-roots level.

We in the Pacific are grateful to all our development partners for their continuing support and their commitment to working closely with us in developing mechanisms for strengthening development coordination, improving development outcomes, using available resources effectively and ensuring inclusiveness in our approach to development.

We are very much aware of the fact that despite continued high levels of development assistance over many years, the economic and development performance of island States in the Pacific region remains weak. Many countries in our region, including Vanuatu, are not on track to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Vanuatu will therefore remain firmly committed to the principles of the Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific. We are committed to working closely with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and other multilateral agencies to ensure that all resources made available to the region are focused on the aim of achieving real progress towards the MDGs. We are also committed to work with our individual donor partners to ensure that they support our national development priorities that are linked to our overall efforts to achieve the MDGs.

However, Vanuatu is aware that commitments to strengthening development coordination in the Pacific region are being made against the backdrop of the global economic crisis. My delegation therefore wishes to renew our call to international financial institutions to assist Pacific island countries in responding to the international economic crisis. Vanuatu is very concerned that its recent high economic growth performance, which rose above 6 per cent between 2006 and 2007, will fall sharply as a result of the global economic recession. International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank growth estimates forecast that Vanuatu's economy will grow at a slower

pace in 2008 and 2009, averaging between 3 and 4 per cent. Growth prospects for the future continue to be uncertain. Maintaining strong economic growth over the next few years will be critical if Vanuatu is to succeed in sustained delivery of such basic services as education, health and infrastructure development to its 80 scattered islands.

In the light of these concerns Vanuatu is pleased that in February 2010 it will be hosting a Pacific-United Nations Conference on The Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis in the Pacific. Discussions of the organizational arrangements for this important event are under way between my Government, United Nations specialized agencies actively engaged in the Pacific region and Pacific regional organizations. We all look forward to the outcome of the conference, especially in terms of guidance and support for building Pacific regional partnerships that can assist us in addressing the impacts of this and future global economic crises on the livelihoods of our people.

The complex and challenging circumstances in Fiji have led to international condemnation and pressure for early elections to be held. Further international pressure has been brought to bear on the Government of Fiji in view of more recent developments. While Vanuatu is part of the Pacific-wide regional calls for an early return of democracy in Fiji, my Government believes that continued engagement of the Fiji Government by the international community will be critical. Under Vanuatu's chairmanship, the Melanesian Spearhead Group has continued to maintain high-level dialogue with the Government of Fiji, primarily to ascertain that Government's views and to put forward the concerns of neighbouring States.

Vanuatu welcomes the recent establishment of a full-fledged department to oversee the implementation of the framework for change that the Fiji Government introduced recently and to facilitate a nationwide process of reconciliation and dialogue. As the closest neighbouring island State, Vanuatu continues to plead that the process of returning Fiji to democracy and parliamentary legitimacy should be driven by peaceful dialogue and genuine concern for the socio-economic well-being of the people of Fiji. Any punitive measures would not be in the economic and social interest of the good people of Fiji or the region of the Pacific as a whole. We are all too aware of the unprecedented challenges that small island developing States like Vanuatu have come to be faced with today. Man-made or linked with such phenomena as climate change, these challenges pose unacceptable implications for the social, economic and political structures of our small island States and often have grave security implications.

Vanuatu would like at this juncture cordially to applaud the tireless and collective efforts of all the island nations, large and small, in cooperating and working together towards the adoption by the General Assembly this past June of resolution 63/281 on climate change and its possible security implications. This is indeed a historical milestone for Pacific small island developing States, such as my own country, because for the first time the security implications of climate change were brought to the attention of the international community. Over the years differing and conflicting views have stalled the strenuous efforts of the small island countries in convincing the world that the impact of climate change was irreversible. Inherent in many of the arguments that needed to be overcome was the idea that there was still time.

At this point I wish to reiterate that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must be the principal forum for addressing climate change. Given our vulnerabilities and geographic realities, we in the Pacific region have been among the first fully to accept the security implications of climate change. I would like to stress here that no country, small or large, developed or developing, will be able to avoid the security implications of climate change, which are already affecting the livelihoods of our people, as the international community struggles to come to terms with the idea that climate change poses a real threat to the future survival of mankind. Unless all the relevant organs of the United Nations intensify their efforts to consider and address the issue of climate change, no word will be more appropriate to the global situation under this particular crisis than the word "doomed". The momentum seen today forces upon us the realization that these threats are real and therefore require urgent attention.

In preparations for the coming conference in Copenhagen, leaders of the Alliance of Small Island States have agreed this week that more action is required from members of the international community in living up to their commitments. While globalization and interdependency have brought with them both opportunities and challenges for the small island

States, the challenges predominate and are ominous. The gathering of world leaders at the Summit on Climate Change at this year's General Assembly was a reaffirmation that climate change presents a security threat to all our nations and peoples.

Consisting of volcanic and coral islands, Vanuatu is one of the smaller island nations in the South Pacific region and in the world. Because of Vanuatu's rapidly growing young population and low economic growth rate, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assessment, until very recently, ranked it as one of the poorest countries in the South Pacific region. This degree of underdevelopment drastically limits its capacity to effectively curb threats associated with the adverse impacts of climate change.

More than 80 per cent of the people of Vanuatu live off the land through subsistence farming, which constitutes their contribution to the national economy. Vanuatuan traditional farming practices have been shaped by farmers' subsistence needs and climatic conditions. Land has always been precious to the Ni-Vanuatu; rights to its ownership and use form a central part of their culture and traditional governance. The rapidly growing population of Vanuatu places increasing pressure on access to a finite amount of farmland. This issue is likely to be compounded by probable losses of arable land owing to the adverse effects of climate change. Such possible losses raise serious economic, political and security implications for Vanuatu.

Not only is Vanuatu among the least developed countries, but it remains one of the most disaster-prone nations among the small island States. It is highly susceptible to cyclones, coastal erosion, river flooding, earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions.

Without doubt these are challenging times. We followed with great interest the recent Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. Vanuatu is deeply concerned that the world financial crisis, like climate change, is caused by external forces beyond our control, and yet its rippling effects are quickly reaching our nation's most vulnerable populations. Children, women, the disabled and the working poor will be the hardest hit and the least able to cope with dramatic changes.

Vanuatu is indeed being hurt by a variety of economic realities, such as decreasing trade, erratic commodity prices, increased borrowing costs and strains on official development assistance. One of the reasons for this downturn is that we are quite dependent on external financing, in the form of both aid and trade. Furthermore our foreign-exchange earnings and our Government revenue rely on a small number of commodities. However, we are confident that we will be able to counteract those weaknesses in our economic situation by introducing progressive microeconomic policy mechanisms, improving Government structures and striving to maintain political stability. This plan is in line with working to implement the Millennium Development Goals and to achieve country targets by the year 2015.

Vanuatu emphatically concurs with the premise of the upcoming Copenhagen conference that climate change is one of the most fundamental challenges ever to confront humanity. No issue is more fundamental to long-term global prosperity, and no issue is more essential to our survival as a species. I strongly feel that a fair and comprehensive global deal in Copenhagen will represent a step forward for all us, for nations small or large, developing or developed. Mutual cooperation, respect and trust will be the key political driving forces for a successful deal in Copenhagen.

While we commend recent efforts to reform the United Nations, Vanuatu shares the view of many other countries that to ensure a stronger and more effective Organization we need to reconsider the membership of the Security Council sooner rather than later. If the Council's membership better reflected the world's geography and better represented currently underrepresented groups, the United Nations would build a stronger sense of common responsibility and collective responsiveness. A more representative Council would bring openness and transparency, create confidence and ameliorate understanding and cooperation.

Still, any reform must be implemented in a way that does not affect the authority of the Council. Of course there are diverse vested interests among us. But our common interests and the United Nations role in furthering them must continue to hold a central place to ensure the continuity of the international legal framework. Negotiations must therefore be conducted in an atmosphere of inclusion and through constructive dialogue and positive engagement. Diatribes offer no solutions. We must remain resolute in our defence of

the United Nations: the necessity of this Organization is continuously made clear by the horrors that the scourges of armed conflict, disease and famine inflict on people, especially women and children.

On a more administrative level, the highly bureaucratic procedures and accession mechanisms established by the United Nations system for much needed funds have placed unnecessary strain on local capacities. As the burgeoning climate crisis looms on the horizon we need to identify ways of simplifying procedures, such as those for accessing climate change mitigation funds, and to consider revising delivery modalities, including exploring direct access possibilities. The blueprint for international cooperation may be in place but it must be followed up by action.

Finally, my delegation welcomes Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and disarmament. The presence of all the leaders of the Permanent Five at the meeting (see S/PV.6191) demonstrates a commitment to control the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Maintaining international peace and security will always remain humanity's greatest challenge, and there is hope.

Despite all our differences and diversities, human security for all is our main objective. We recognize the efforts of the Secretary-General and commend the manner in which he has pursued the mobilization of political momentum for Copenhagen with the relevant bodies of the United Nations. Saving the Earth and humanity remains our ultimate goal.

In conclusion, we go to Copenhagen with optimism. The future is in our hands. Let us not deprive future generations of their right to live in a world of peace and stability.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I believe it is fair to say that we have just come through an annus horribilis: a year marked by the worldwide financial and economic crisis, the worst since the Great Depression of 1929; by an increase in hunger and poverty — we are speaking about some 100 million more people sinking into hunger and chronic poverty due to the crisis, and more than 1 billion people suffering from hunger in 2009; by the dramatic rise in unemployment — the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that 50 million workers are at risk of losing or have already lost their jobs; by set-backs in the hard-won progress towards the Millennium Development Goals; and by the outbreak of a pandemic. It was also a year during which questions about the relevance of the United Nations and calls for an overhaul of international governance grew ever louder.

Accordingly, we see the need to take stock and draw lessons, namely, to review the major challenges the international community is confronting in terms of development, human rights and the rule of law, peacekeeping and security, disarmament and non-proliferation and the fight against climate change. And what better forum to discuss these issues than the General Assembly of the United Nations?

The economic crisis that hit the world a year ago was even more devastating, as it took place while we were still struggling to cope with, without having overcome them, the food and energy crises, as well as the acceleration, obviously, of climate change.

I have just mentioned the particularly negative impact of the crisis on the poorest. To face those challenges, we need concerted action, coherent action, global action, a true global partnership for development, based on the shared responsibilities of donors and recipients.

My country will continue to assume its share of responsibility by maintaining its efforts in terms of official development assistance (ODA). Having spent 0.95 per cent of its gross national income on ODA in 2008, the Government that was elected in June 2009 has not only confirmed that it maintains the quantitative target of 1 per cent of its gross national income, but will also continue to insist on the qualitative improvement of Luxembourg's cooperation in order to further increase efficiency, all of it in the

context of sustainable development integrating economic, social and environmental issues.

Luxembourg calls on all Member States to make the necessary efforts to keep all the commitments that were made together in this forum and that we have reiterated at the Millennium Summit in Monterrey and more recently in Doha.

We must, however, learn the lessons provided by this multidimensional crisis and contemplate a more systemic reform of the existing multilateral system, including the financial and economic architecture, and adapt it to the current political and socio-economic realities.

As I stated in this forum in June at the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, the United Nations and its principal organs must be at the centre of such a reflection. The Economic and Social Council, which is the central mechanism for coordination and the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for economic and social issues, will have a particularly important role to play in this regard.

Luxembourg, which chairs the Economic and Social Council this year, has assumed its responsibilities in that regard and is working towards full implementation of the various mandates entrusted to the Council by Member States in the framework of the international Conference.

All these actions require a strong multilateral framework based on sound legal rules that are binding on all Member States. In times of crisis, unilateral tendencies unfortunately tend to recur. While it is important that representatives of the major economies of the world meet to discuss common problems, particularly the economic and financial crisis we have experienced in recent months, such forums should not and must not substitute for multilateral structures and existing intergovernmental mandates.

In order to retain the relevance of our multilateral structures, they must be based on trust and cooperation: trust between the citizen and the State, trust among States themselves, whether they are from the North or the South, rich or poor, and confidence of States in the United Nations, which is our common good.

It lies in our hands to assume our responsibilities, to overcome our divisions, to move the thinking and the decision-making forward, and to ensure consistency. It lies in our hands to undertake the necessary reform efforts required for a Security Council that reflects, at last, the geopolitical realities of today, and which is more representative, efficient and transparent; for a revitalized General Assembly, and for a stronger and more effective Economic and Social Council. It lies in our hands to demonstrate the continued relevance of our Organization and its capacity to act and to formulate joint responses, global responses and legitimate responses.

In our globalized world, there is no turning away.

We are all concerned, and the challenges we are facing are of an ever-increasing complexity, including in matters of peace and security. Yesterday, we commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), an anniversary that one would somehow have preferred not to have to celebrate, for while it allowed us to express our gratitude for the outstanding work done by that United Nations agency in the service of the Palestinian people on a daily basis, it is true, it is also synonymous with failure. Sixty years later, the situation in the Middle East remains unresolved.

While we welcome that the new Administration in the United States is determined to seek a solution based on the coexistence of two States and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and while we, together with our European Union partners, are committed to working actively with the United States and other Quartet members, including, obviously, the United Nations, to achieve this goal, at the same time we deeply regret that Israel persists in its policy of colonization.

Mr. Shaheed (Maldives), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It cannot be repeated too often: the settlement activity is not only illegal under international law, but it is also an obstacle to peace. To continue colonization is to persist in humiliating the Palestinians, in dominating the Palestinian people. Without the clear signal of an end to this policy, it is unlikely that serious negotiations can resume.

We fully support the intention of the President of the United States to engage in negotiations, and we will support him in this endeavour. Annapolis showed that Israelis and Palestinians, when they are alone

around the negotiating table, are not able to show a level of commitment commensurate with the fundamental problems, namely, Jerusalem, the question of refugees and their right to return, security and the issue of borders.

We call on all parties to shoulder their responsibilities and, through their actions, to establish an environment conducive to the resumption of negotiations to resolve the conflict. The end of divisions among Palestinians and the intra-Palestinian reconciliation that is centred on President Mahmoud Abbas, who has demonstrated in the West Bank that substantial progress in terms of security and governance is possible, are just as much a part of this as the adoption of confidence-building measures by Israel and Arab countries or the simultaneous search for solutions to the conflicts between, on the one hand, Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and, on the other hand, Israel and Lebanon.

In that context, I would also like to stress just how urgent it is to find a sustainable solution to the crisis in Gaza through the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). An end must be put to the untenable situation of 1.5 million Palestinians living in a prison. Giving hope and motivation to the Palestinian people is a basic human obligation. Light must also be shed on the events in Gaza, including the events following the release of the United Nations fact-finding mission's report, which has just been published and which has brought shocking acts to light. The credibility of the United Nations is at stake in this matter.

The credibility of the international community too is at stake in a number of respects with regard to the situation in Afghanistan. It is at stake as far as the establishment and maintenance of peace and security is concerned, but also in terms of preserving the rule of law and respect for our fundamental values, ensuring the economic and social development of the country and combating poverty. That was the mandate given to the United Nations back in 2001. It has become clear that, eight years after the adoption of that mandate, the progress made is still not enough. In the light of the increasing number of bloody attacks carried out across the country, the events surrounding the recent presidential elections and the alarming figures in terms of development objectives, public opinion is beginning to wonder whether in fact we are not moving backwards.

There is no easy solution, but there is certainly no alternative to our continued engagement in the country. I would like to stress that, together with our European Union and NATO partners, we will remain engaged alongside the authorities and the people of Afghanistan. There can be no question of abandoning the people, who have been devastated by decades of conflict and violations of their most basic rights. The goal must be a stable and democratic State where all forces, including the Taliban, recognize and respect the rule of law and basic human rights.

Another conflict area that has long been a source of concern and where our hopes of lasting peace were once again called into question in the past year is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Once again it is civilians who must suffer the consequences. We are seriously concerned about the crimes committed against civilians, especially women and children.

In that context I would like to welcome the draft Security Council resolution that provides for concrete follow-up to resolution 1820 (2008), on women and peace and security. Luxembourg fully supports that text. I also welcome the personal commitment of the Secretary-General in the fight against sexual violence. It is important that the United Nations system as a whole address the phenomenon of sexual violence, which is used increasingly as a weapon of war in armed conflict even after hostilities have ended. It is essential to strengthen efforts to prevent such acts from happening and to bring to justice those who commit those horrible crimes.

While much remains to be said about the challenges in terms of the maintenance of peace and security, especially in the context of the current debate on the future of peacekeeping operations — a debate that I applaud — allow me to dwell for a moment on the current encouraging developments in the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

I welcome President Obama's initiative to engage the Security Council in a broader discussion of issues pertaining to non-proliferation and disarmament, beyond the specific area of issues related to sanctions. As we are only a few months from the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is important that we demonstrate our determination to carry out that task as regards the three pillars of the

NPT, the ultimate goal being a world free of nuclear weapons.

The same goes for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the other cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. As I said yesterday during the meeting of States that have ratified the CTBT, the call of the Security Council to sign and ratify the CTBT and the commitment of President Obama to do everything possible to ensure ratification in the United States are crucial. The Treaty must at last enter into force. We hope that those encouraging developments will lead others to adopt a more constructive attitude, with full respect for their international obligations.

Beyond non-proliferation issues, however, we must not overlook disarmament itself. In that regard, we certainly welcome the decision of the United States and the Russian Federation to conduct negotiations to conclude a new comprehensive agreement following the expiry of the START II Treaty next December.

Allow me as well to say a few words about an issue that is also relevant in terms of security and defence. I am referring to the welcome decision — in my opinion, at least — by the United States Administration to abandon the effort to put in place a missile defence shield. It always seemed to me that the way forward in that regard was not to adopt unilateral measures, but to engage in discussion and cooperation with our Russian partners with a view to ensuring our common security.

I cannot conclude without saying a few words about climate change, which is perhaps the greatest challenge to world prosperity in the long term. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General once again for convening the summit of 22 September. That resulted in political mobilization at the highest level, which is crucial if we want to make the Copenhagen Conference a success and set a new course towards sustainable development and green growth that reduces carbon emissions.

The scientific evidence exists. It is now up to us to respond with determination in facing those facts. Developed countries will have to set the example by agreeing to ambitious and higher than average targets to reduce carbon dioxide by 2050. They must do so by entering into binding legal commitments, including for the medium term, in the context of an effective and universal international regime to which countries contribute on the basis of their capacity.

Moreover, the issue of adaptation to climate change — including also the financing of related efforts, which will necessarily constitute an additional expense — should be treated as a priority at Copenhagen. Allow me to note in passing that the disarmament efforts that I have just described should free up financial resources that could be put to better use in this regard.

Meanwhile, together with its partners in the European Union, Luxembourg has already committed itself to reach the so-called 20-20-20 goal of increasing energy efficiency in the European Union by 20 per cent, increasing renewable energy by 20 per cent of total energy consumption and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent compared to 1990 levels. Beginning several years ago, Luxembourg began to systematically incorporate the issue of adaptation to climate change in its development programmes.

Climate change, however, will have an impact not only on development, but also on the full enjoyment of human rights and on the security of countries. I therefore very much welcome the report produced by the Secretary-General following the initiative taken in that regard by Pacific small island developing States, which addresses the full scope of the problem.

Luxembourg remains firmly convinced of the relevance of a multilateral approach in which the United Nations is at the centre. We will continue to base our policies and make our contributions with a view to creating a world that is more just, more peaceful and more prosperous, as enshrined in our founding Charter. It is also because of this passionate motivation to work towards a strong and effective multilateralism that Luxembourg, a founding Member of the United Nations, aspires to become, for the first time, a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2013-2014.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Theodore Brent Symonette, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bahamas.

Mr. Symonette (Bahamas): On behalf of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, I convey my sincere congratulations on Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki's election to preside over the

General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. My delegation wishes to assure him of its full cooperation and support throughout this session. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate his predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, on his stewardship of the sixty-third session.

The current global financial and economic crisis, possibly the worst since the Great Depression, threatens to negate all that we have achieved thus far on our development agenda, at both the national and the international levels. This threat was acknowledged at the High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2008. The scenario is no better today.

The fallout for the Bahamas has been considerable. Ours is a very small, open economy that is closely linked to the performance of most developed economies. Tourism matters in the Bahamas; it is our primary industry and it affects all aspects of economic life in our country. We are in the midst of arguably one of the most difficult tourism seasons on record. Visitor arrivals are down, hotel occupancies are down and revenues earned from tourism are down. Unemployment has sharply increased. The continued economic uncertainty means that unemployment will pose a problem until the global economy is stabilized and returns to growth. In this regard, we are heartened by some of the signs of global economic recovery.

The Government of the Bahamas acted quickly to soften the impact of the international economic downturn on our population. We took appropriate steps to ensure the continued integrity of our domestic fiscal and financial system; we accelerated planned capital works to generate employment and economic activity; and we increased targeted social relief for those most disadvantaged by the crisis. In implementing these policies and programmes, the Government exercised appropriate fiscal restraint, so as to ensure sustainability in the long term as well as the medium term and to encourage and ensure that the economy would be well placed to respond swiftly to any upturn in the global economy. The Bahamas believes that it is critically important to global financial health that actions taken at the national level be complemented by appropriate international responses.

This year the General Assembly will consider the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations for the period 2010-2012, as well as the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Bahamas takes this opportunity to reiterate its long-standing position that per capita gross national income (GNI) should not be given undue weight in determining capacity to pay, as it often leads to distortions. Nowhere is this distortion more visible than in the case of the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations. The current scales place the Bahamas, a small developing island nation, in the same category as the most developed economies in the world, with the exception of the permanent members of the Security Council. This unjust formula creates an onerous burden, and we call upon this body to address the inequity, which seriously undermines the development objectives of the Bahamas, as well as other developing countries.

Clearly the GNI criterion does not properly reflect either the vulnerability of our economy or the extraordinary costs associated with the duplication of infrastructure required by our archipelagic configuration. Yet, despite our vulnerabilities, we have never wavered in our responsibilities as a fully fledged member of the international community and will continue to meet our obligations to the United Nations in the manner prescribed and agreed. While my Government is committed to paying its assessed contributions in a full and timely manner, we believe that the proposed scale of assessments is unfair and unduly burdensome to countries such as the Bahamas, and should therefore be reconsidered and adjusted, taking into account those considerations that reflect our vulnerabilities.

Climate change presents acute challenges for small island developing States such as the Bahamas, and we are certainly vulnerable to its impact. One of the major consequences of climate change for the Bahamas has been the increase in the number, frequency and ferocity of the hurricanes affecting our country and region over the last two decades. Restoration and recovery efforts required as a result of these extreme events have taken a toll amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars over the past decade alone, diverting scarce resources from other critically important national development programmes and compromising our efforts at sustainable development.

Hence, we have a special interest not only in actions taken to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change but also in measures designed to slow —

indeed, to reverse — actions that negatively affect climate. As a founding member of the Alliance of Small Island States, the Bahamas has joined with many like-minded States in our region and around the world in calling for a global agreement in Copenhagen, with legally binding targets, that will permit us to achieve the ultimate objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Bahamas is cognizant that the responsibility for climate change does not rest with developed countries alone. Within our limited capabilities, we have undertaken a number of appropriate actions, highlighted during the High-Level Event, in order to increase our resistance to the adverse impacts of climate change. But it is also important that initiatives undertaken in the quest for environmental protection do not cause greater harm than good. For example, the introduction of an air-passenger levy will damage our already weakened tourism industry, the industry that is our economic lifeline. The proposed marine bunkering levies or taxes are likely to have a similar negative impact on our maritime registry's cost competitiveness. Such supposedly well-intentioned environmental initiatives come at a time when resources available for adaptation are not readily available to small island developing States like the Bahamas.

As an archipelagic nation, the Bahamas faces particular challenges in the area of maritime safety and security. My Government has committed tremendous financial and technical resources to combat illicit trafficking of drugs and weapons; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and human smuggling, and underscores the need for effective cooperation and coordination among States, as well as the development of innovative approaches to resolve those issues and complement national efforts. The Bahamas welcomes the constructive engagement of the United Nations and the International Maritime Organization in addressing the issue of piracy. As the country with the world's third largest ship registry, the Bahamas will continue to engage with its partners in the international community to ensure the safety and security of international shipping.

Haiti is a near neighbour and a member of our Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The Bahamas and the Caribbean Community States are committed to Haiti's stabilization and to its political and economic development in the short and long terms. This cannot be achieved without sustained support from the international community. The Bahamas is therefore heartened by the United Nations active and sustained engagement in Haiti over the past four and a half years, through the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. We share the hope of the Secretary-General that Haiti is moving away from a history of conflict towards a future of peaceful and sustainable development.

We call on the Security Council to further extend the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti beyond 15 October 2009, as recommended by the Secretary-General. We are also hopeful that the recent appointment of former United States President Bill Clinton as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti will help to keep the issues affecting Haiti at the forefront of the agenda of the national and international community. The Security Council meeting on Haiti earlier this month was certainly most welcome in this regard.

An increased level of criminal activity is creating new challenges for the Bahamas — a phenomenon shared with other countries in our region. We continue to implement national and regional anti-crime initiatives to combat this scourge, which undermines our economies and, indeed, affects our social stability.

Illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and small arms and light weapons are major contributing factors to this phenomenon. The Bahamas — as many are aware — is not a producer of illicit drugs; neither the Bahamas nor the other States members of CARICOM are manufacturers or suppliers of small arms and light weapons. Yet, illicit drugs and light weapons account overwhelmingly for the amount of crime in our societies. A disproportionate amount of our scarce budgetary resources are dedicated to fighting illicit drug and light arms trafficking through our territory and in dealing with the terrible fallout in our communities.

The Bahamas is fully committed to enhancing regional and international cooperation in the area of peace and security. We are pleased that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has agreed to re-engage with the Caribbean region to support the fight against the crime and violence that today mar our societies.

In closing, my delegation wishes to state that the current economic crisis dramatically demonstrates the interdependence of the economies of the world. This in

turn shows the critically important role which organizations like the United Nations can play in facilitating dialogue and crafting creative solutions to global problems. As we continue to face these unprecedented global challenges, the Bahamas reaffirms its commitment to engaging fully and constructively with its partners in the international community to find collective solutions to the challenges which confront all of us.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Fredrick Fono, Deputy Prime Minister of Solomon Islands.

Mr. Fono (Solomon Islands): I bring warm greetings to the Assembly from the happy isles and convey my Government and people's profound congratulations to Mr. Treki on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We are confident that, under his leadership, we will harvest the opportunities the global agenda has to offer.

My delegation further takes this opportunity to commend his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann. He indeed provided exemplary leadership and inspired us to realize our unique collective strength. Throughout his tenure in office, he kept the most vulnerable people at the front, centre and back of all of our engagements. We wish him God's blessing in his future endeavours.

The global financial and economic crisis has presented immense challenges to the international community. Simply put, the effects of the crisis are impacting all members of the United Nations family. Consequently, Solomon Islands' economy has been hit by low commodity prices, declining revenues and widening budgetary deficits. My country has responded by freezing all Government recruitment and reducing national recurrent and development expenditures by 35 per cent. Between 2008 and 2009, our economic growth has taken a negative dive from 6 per cent to 1 per cent, which is affecting the delivery of services to our people.

The world has taken measures to address the systematic fragilities of the international financial system. To this end, Solomon Islands welcomes the outcome of the June 2009 Conference on the financial crisis, calling for greater cooperation by all, including the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions. We remain hopeful that the stimulus packages dished out reach the poorest of the poor, as many will be under stress for a long time to come.

Frequent natural disasters are threatening development across the world and climate change continues to affect the lives of our people, creating new pockets of poverty while continuing to increase as threats. Unless an ambitious outcome emanates from Copenhagen, we will find that we are fighting a losing battle. I join the call for urgent action, particularly for small island developing States and least developed countries. For us, climate change poses the most serious threat to our survival and viability, and undermines our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Solomon Islands fully subscribes to the declaration issued this week by the Alliance of Small Islands Developing States. The benchmark for the negotiations must be founded on the vulnerability of the small island developing States and the least developed countries. Science tells us that the future of low-lying islands is uncertain unless deep and ambitious cuts to harmful greenhouse gas emissions are undertaken by Annex 1 countries at levels greater than 45 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020 and more than 95 per cent of 1990 levels by 2050. We call for the global average temperature to increase well below 1.5 degrees Celsius if we are to prevent the acidification of our oceans from threatening our very existence.

Deforestation and forest degradation contribute nearly 20 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Solomon Islands agrees that this should be one of the mitigating solutions for protecting the health of our environment. We further urge that this be considered as an outcome in Copenhagen. My country is currently carrying out an inventory of its forests and intends to participate in the carbon market. We also hope that multilateral financial mechanisms will become available to the most vulnerable States in ensuring that appropriate technology transfer for renewable energy receives the attention it deserves.

Solomon Islands is a peace-loving country and believes that we need to seriously seek a stable international system. This can be achieved by calling for global restraint on all military spending and making a firm commitment to begin holistic multilateral disarmament negotiations. This is an issue that has been stalled for years on end and continues to be

weakly addressed through piecemeal multilateral arms agreements.

Solomon Islands emerged from a conflict situation 11 years ago. This year marks the sixth anniversary of our partnership with the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, commonly referred to as RAMSI. Under the partnership, State institutions have been strengthened and political stability has allowed our Parliament to enact some 30 laws in less than 24 months. Public services are reaching out to the scattered populations on our hundreds of islands, indicating that change is happening.

This year, our relationship with RAMSI has progressed from one of assistance to one of partnership, providing for a framework of cooperation between the two parties, with clearly defined joint strategic goals, distinct roles and commitments, with the overall objective of creating a secure, stable and self-sustaining socio-economic and political system for all Solomon Islanders. The Foreign Relations Committee of our national Parliament has completed its review of the facilitation of the International Assistance Act and will submit its report to the national legislature in November. I take this moment to thank my Pacific neighbours for their continued support and contribution to the Regional Mission. It is our fervent hope that this partnership can increase its international visibility and interact more with the United Nations, as provided for under the relevant chapter of the Charter.

As part of our nation-building and healing process, Solomon Islands instituted its Truth and Reconciliation Commission in April. Officiating at the launch of the Commission was Nobel laureate and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu of South Africa. The Commission allows Solomon Islands to revisit one of the darkest chapters of its history, and we do so with courage, perseverance and a desire to seek a just and permanent peace within our growing nation. To this end, we thank the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and all our partners for their support.

The time frame for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is fast drawing to a close. The Solomon Islands supports the proposal to convene a review summit next year, and hopes that the forthcoming gathering will reinvigorate our global partnership and enable it to realize the Millennium Development Goals within the given time frame. My country also welcomes the decision of the General Assembly (resolution 63/227) to convene the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2011. Similarly, we welcome the review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, scheduled for next year. Both review processes should strengthen the global partnerships and commitments undertaken within agreed international cooperative frameworks.

Eighty five per cent of the population of Solomon Islands resides in rural areas. Therefore, we have adopted a rural-focused development approach in our efforts to meet the MDGs. Solomon Islands is poised to make gains in achieving some of these goals through various partnerships. In this regard, I am pleased to acknowledge that, with the support of New Zealand and the Republic of China, the Solomon Islands is now offering free basic education for its children through the third form. Work has also begun on eliminating malaria, the number-one killer in the Solomon Islands, with the launch of the programme in one of our nine provinces. My Government thanks Australia for its support and contribution to that end. I also wish to thank the Republic of China, the European Union and other development partners for their contribution to the advancement of the Government's rural development policy.

Human development remains a key ingredient of our fight against poverty. Solomon Islands opened a school of tourism this year. We have shifted resources towards developing our tourism industry in order to offset the projected revenue loss resulting from the reduced harvesting of our natural forests. The same policy also applies to the agriculture, fisheries and mining sectors.

South-South cooperation continues to invest in our people; it has guaranteed the education of 50 students studying in Cuba, and my country thanks Cuba for the gesture. Solomon Islands also thanks its Melanesian neighbour Papua New Guinea for its ongoing bilateral assistance by increasing our presence in Port Moresby and offering scholarships to our students studying in Papua New Guinea.

Global dynamics have changed since the United Nations was established 64 years ago. The membership

then numbered only 51. Reform of the Security Council has eluded us for the past 15 years. We therefore need to increase the legitimacy of our Council and strengthen its role in preserving international peace. In this regard, my delegation was pleased to see the debate on Security Council reform progress into informal intergovernmental negotiations at the previous session of the General Assembly. We are equally pleased to note that three rounds of negotiations have occurred in the past eight months, signifying that the multilateral seed of reform of our institutions has been sowed. We need to ensure that it takes root at this session.

The relations of the Secretariat with Member States are important. The interaction of Solomon Islands with our Organization has grown and matured over time. Our Government is now finalizing the allocation of land to give the United Nations a permanent home in our capital. We hope that the Secretariat will reciprocate this gesture and seriously consider maintaining a fully fledged country presence in Solomon Islands. Comparatively speaking, despite the fact that my nation has one of the largest subregional country programmes, relations continue to be micromanaged from abroad. My delegation takes this opportunity once again to renew our call to upgrade the UNDP country presence in Solomon Islands from Deputy Resident Representative level to Resident Representative.

Here it would be remiss of me not to welcome UNDP's new Administrator, Ms. Helen Clark. We wish her every success in her tenure in office and are confident that she will look at all issues with fresh eyes. Development is, after all, one of the highest callings of our Organization. Solomon Islands also encourages the Secretariat to ensure that its staff represents the diversity of its membership, in particular that of States that have yet to fulfil their quota.

Over the past couple of months, coastal States with continental shelves have made submissions to extend their respective territorial claims beyond their 200-mile exclusive economic zones. I am pleased to inform this Assembly that Solomon Islands has submitted a number of claims and looks forward to working with the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

While extending an exclusive economic zone is a sovereign decision, we are mindful of our global environmental responsibilities. Solomon Islands is one of the six countries of the Coral Triangle Initiative. Three months ago, leaders from the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands met in Indonesia and agreed to work collaboratively across political boundaries to conserve 75 per cent of the world's coral species, 40 per cent of the world's reef fish species and 51 per cent of the world's mangrove species. Our populations rely on our marine resources for survival and income. We hope to keep it that way for generations to come.

Good information and data are vital to allowing national and international systems to make informed decisions. In this connection, we would like to see United Nations support for our national statistics office for the collation of data in real time and its distribution to all decision makers.

To foster a vibrant economy, investment in infrastructure is needed. I am pleased to say that we have finally enacted a law that will open up our telecommunications industry to competition.

On the issue of human rights, Solomon Islands recognizes that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. All human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis. That is one of the principles of the newly established Human Rights Council.

Solomon Islands continues to support the Council's internationally agreed principles. Unfortunately, within the Third Committee issues of human rights continue to be heavily politicized, divisive and country-specific, in disregard of the universal principles of cooperation and dialogue. My delegation would like to see the universal periodic review be the reference point for assessing countries' human rights situations.

Before I say anything about Taiwan's cross-Strait relations, Solomon Islands conveys its sympathy and embraces the pain and suffering of all those impacted by typhoon Morakot. We also acknowledge the spirit and strength of the Government and people of the Republic of China in rising above that tragedy with resilience to rebuild their lives and recover from the natural catastrophe.

My country continues to follow cross-Strait developments with deep interest. A new era of relations

is emerging between the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China. Relations have been marked by an increased series of engagements. Direct flights, shipping, postal cooperation and exchanges on food safety, inter alia, have been initiated. This people-centred approach continues to build bridges of trust, tolerance and confidence. We wish this positive interaction every success.

Earlier this year, my delegation was encouraged to witness Taiwan's admission as an observer to the World Health Assembly. We hope with all sincerity that similar overtures will be accorded to Taiwan by other specialized entities within the United Nations system.

On the question of the Middle East, my delegation associates itself with the statement of Finland's former President, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, when he said "All conflicts can be settled, and there are no excuses for allowing them to become eternal". To find a lasting and just peace in the region, the determination of all Members is required. For 62 years, the matter has been discussed within this Assembly. Solomon Islands believes that, in the right conditions, a politically negotiated two-State solution can be reached. We support all international efforts in finding a lasting and permanent solution.

In our effort to create a better world, dialogue and cooperation between religions and cultures are needed. Stereotypes created by a few must be overcome. Extremists thrive on mistrust, fear and suspicion and use them to their advantage. They must be isolated. My delegation acknowledges the initiative of Saudi Arabia to bring together leaders from the East and West in promoting a global culture of peace. This initiative presents a new beginning that we should all build upon.

We must all work towards stabilizing the international system, which means that those with power must not victimize the weak by interfering with the latter's health and social needs, be it for ideological, political or security reasons. Unilateral and regional economic blockades and punitive action by States and intergovernmental institutions must and should be replaced with genuine cooperation and sincere dialogue. In this regard, we call on the entire international community to fully engage with Fiji. As its Melanesian neighbour, Solomon Islands continues to do so at all political levels.

In closing, in view of the many challenges we are confronting today, the words of Abraham Lincoln in 1862 still holds true:

> "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew".

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Saudabayev (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Treki on his election to the high post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and wish him every success as he presides over the session.

Eight years ago, on 11 September, Ms. Zhannetta Tsoy, a citizen of Kazakhstan, having kissed her daughter and husband, left for her first day at a new job in New York's tallest building. Two hours later, she perished, along with 3,000 Americans and citizens of other 91 countries. She was buried under the debris of what had once been the World Trade Centre's Twin Towers. On that day, as Kazakhstan's ambassador in Washington D.C., along with all Americans and others, I felt acutely how fragile, vulnerable and interdependent our world had become. This terrorist act and the world's unity in its strict condemnation showed that only together can we make our present and our future safer and better. Indeed, the key to the successful resolution of today's most acute problems lies precisely in the world's unity and understanding.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and our entire people have supported the global fight against terrorism from the start by assisting the efforts of the international coalition in Afghanistan. However, there has never been and there will never be a purely military solution to the Afghan problem. We note with satisfaction that coalition members have begun to pay more attention to non-military aspects of security.

To the best of its ability, Kazakhstan is also assisting the international efforts to rehabilitate Afghanistan. We provide considerable humanitarian aid to that country. Moreover, we are developing a long-term educational programme to train qualified Afghan

specialists, and are also considering other forms of assistance to that country.

Long-term stability in Afghanistan is impossible without effective measures to tackle illicit drug trafficking. The Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre has been established in Almaty, with the support of the United Nations, to fight illicit drug trafficking. As the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010, I intend to make the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan — a regional neighbour of the OSCE — one of the organization's greatest priorities.

The prospect of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, along with the risk of their acquisition and use by terrorist organizations, remains one of the most serious threats to mankind. As a country that has experienced the horrors of nuclear tests, shut down the world's second-largest nuclear testing site, at Semipalatinsk, and voluntarily renounced the world's fourth-largest nuclear and missile arsenal, Kazakhstan has an absolute moral right to call for more decisive action in the area of disarmament and for the radical strengthening of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction regime. In particular, Kazakhstan deems it important to ensure the soonest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome the efforts of United States President Barack Obama to give new impetus to the non-proliferation process and to eliminate the nuclear threat.

Kazakhstan is in favour of strengthening and ensuring the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We must recognize that the Treaty is asymmetric in that it provides for sanctions only against non-nuclear-weapon States, whereas the nuclear Powers themselves should set the example of reducing and renouncing their nuclear arsenals. In this regard, Kazakhstan welcomed the unanimous adoption yesterday of Security Council resolution 1887 (2009) and believes that this historic decision opens a new era in humankind's efforts to create a world without nuclear weapons. It is gratifying that the measures being undertaken today by the international community reflects the principled position that President Nazarbayev has expressed more than once from this rostrum and in bilateral meetings with heads of nuclear-weapon States and of States with nuclear ambitions.

It is necessary now more than ever to take even more decisive actions. Our President has proposed the development of a new universal treaty on comprehensive horizontal and vertical nuclear non-proliferation. The configuration of the new treaty and its contents will largely depend on the proposals of all interested States. An effective measure to strengthen the non-proliferation regime could be the establishment of an international nuclear fuel bank under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Commission. Kazakhstan is ready to consider the possibility of locating it on our territory.

One important contribution made by Kazakhstan and other States of Central Asia to the implementation of the NPT was the entry into force in March of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. The peculiarity of the Zone is that it is located between two of the world's largest nuclear Powers. The Zone could play a large practical role in preventing the uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear materials and in countering nuclear terrorism. We count on support for the Central Asian Zone, above all from the nuclear Powers, including their possible extension of negative security guarantees. We support the United States of America's initiative to convene a global nuclear security summit next year.

I wish to draw the attention of the General Assembly to a proposal of the President of Kazakhstan on declaring 29 August international day for a world free of nuclear weapons. That date has deep symbolical meaning. On that day in 1949, the Soviet Union conducted its first nuclear test at the Semipalatinsk test site in Kazakhstan, and on the same day in 1991 the test site was shut down forever by decree of our Government. We hope that the General Assembly will support this initiative.

Today, humankind is experiencing the most serious global financial and economic crisis in decades. According to the International Monetary Fund, approximately 50 States have edged to the brink of an economic catastrophe. At the same time, the present crisis was largely inevitable. Unfortunately, the world's economic development and the great leap forward in technology over the past 60 years could not solve such eternal problems as poverty and hunger. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow. More

than a billion people live on less than $1 a day. Despite our exceptional achievements in modern science and medicine, almost 10 million children under five die every year of curable diseases. More than 30 million people worldwide live with HIV, while only 3 million of those have access to antiretroviral therapy.

The economic crisis has forced us to rethink and revisit many conceptual approaches that earlier seemed etched in stone. It has demonstrated once again the urgency of unifying all States' efforts in addressing modern challenges. The leader of our country was among the first to share his vision for the world's post-crisis development. He proposed drafting an international law on a single world currency, and the eventual establishment of a world emissions centre, a world anti-monopoly currency committee and a world committee on market freedom. The United Nations with its structural bodies and specialized agencies is the only global organization capable of addressing such large-scale issues.

At a time of acute social and economic breakdowns, the danger of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts increases considerably. Located at the confluence of Asia and Europe and having maintained peace and harmony in a multi-ethnic and multireligious country throughout its years of independence, Kazakhstan is ready to act as a bridge of mutual understanding and tolerance between the East and the West.

As Chair of the OSCE in 2010 and of the 2011 ministerial conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Kazakhstan is eager fully to use this unique opportunity to strengthen constructive cooperation between diverse cultures and civilizations and to take concrete measures on this issue. Furthermore, since 2003 our country has hosted three Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, supported by the United Nations.

At Kazakhstan's initiative, the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/90 at its sixty-second session, declaring 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. We call on United Nations Member States to participate actively in celebrating the Year. Kazakhstan fully supports the goals of the Alliance of Civilizations and calls on all Member States and agencies of the United Nations system to contribute to strengthening tolerance and mutual understanding in the world.

In the current circumstances, the regional aspect of solving global problems takes on added importance. Our country is firmly committed to the consistent strengthening of regional cooperation for security and development in Central Asia. A unique security architecture is being created in Eurasia, its most important elements being organizations such as the OSCE, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and NATO. In that regard, CICA, convened as a result of an initiative introduced by President Nazarbayev from this rostrum in 1992, has become an effective mechanism for strengthening regional security and cooperation. In 2010, as our country takes up the chairmanship of the OSCE, we intend to work for the good of all its member States to strengthen the organization's effectiveness in addressing new challenges and threats, as well as to further strengthen confidence-building and security measures in the Euro-Atlantic community.

In today's rapidly changing world, the adaptation of the United Nations to modern realities is an important task for all Member States. Kazakhstan supports the reform process for the United Nations and its main bodies based on the principled position of the need to increase the effectiveness, authority and relevance of our global Organization. We are convinced that there is no alternative to the United Nations in the modern world, and there never will be. We support reforms on three principal tracks: revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, reform of the Security Council and coherence of the United Nations system.

Fifty years ago, Martin Luther King Junior said:

> "Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they do not know each other; they do not know each other because they cannot communicate; they cannot communicate because they are separated."

Regrettably, those words are often true today, but they should not be so tomorrow. In an age of globalization and unprecedented interdependence in the world, there should no longer be mistrust, fear and hatred, but the principles of trust, understanding and cooperation should triumph. Only together can we properly address the difficult challenges facing humankind today and make our world safer and better.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie Ehouzou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to express my pleasure at seeing Mr. Treki so brilliantly execute the lofty tasks of the presidency of the General Assembly on behalf of Africa. I offer him my warmest congratulations and wish him every success in that office. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the sincere commitment that he has shown.

The path laid down by the founding fathers of the United Nations for the achievement of its goals is that of dialogue and multilateralism. The United Nations was created to harness the energies of the international community to that end. Soon, we will have been at it for seven decades. Where are we today? Painful fractures hinder humankind and threaten to considerably weaken our capacity for common action. The multifaceted crises that have shaken the global economy have been caused by its accelerated globalization without agreed global governance. These crises have mightily stricken the most vulnerable. Furthermore, they have exposed the planet to grave dangers, the signs of which are undeniably evident.

We should accept the facts. The time for assumptions has passed. The time has come for proactive anticipation, as we now know the cost of indifference, inertia and passivity. We must restore the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil its calling in the pursuit of solutions to the global problems of humankind. Through the dialogue of civilizations, we should reconcile the specificities connected with the diversity of our cultural heritage with the universal standards that arise from the inviolability of human dignity.

The dialogue of civilizations is without doubt an essential precondition for strengthening multilateralism. It can help us return to the fundamental values of respect for life and for nature, awareness of our common destiny, the quest for mutual benefit, and the sense of permanence, sharing and honouring our responsibilities towards future generations. If we wish to reverse the dismal trends and outlook that scientists have described, we must conclude a new alliance between man and nature — a new common agreement. That is how we can regain control of the natural and anthropogenic phenomena that affect our existence on Earth. The Copenhagen Conference in December will be an excellent opportunity that we must not squander.

Above all, we should create conditions to ensure the responsible contribution of all to fully realizing the potential of humankind. To that end, we must eliminate all obstacles to its development. The State and public authorities have a vital role to play in that regard. They must at all times engage with social partners working in the service of freedom and progress.

The independent Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor has shown us the virtues of gradually eliminating old practices that violate the integrity of the individual both as a living being and as a legal and social entity. That is a fundamental precondition to guaranteeing the responsible access of all to the benefits of modernity and shared prosperity. That is why Benin has committed to organizing the regional conference on revitalizing the major recommendations of the independent Commission.

To that end also, my country has declared a resolute war on female genital mutilation through an awareness campaign, the retraining of practitioners and the vigilant enforcement of unambiguous legislation, bolstered by a new family code that establishes the equal rights of men and women. That is also why Benin worked for the proclamation of 2009 as the International Year of Human Rights Learning. The main objective of the Year is to promote the necessary change in thinking to ensure that humankind moves towards full and complete adherence to the universal values enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations must be more effective in supporting national policies to achieve international standards. The Beninese Government has decided to entrust the rationalization of its efforts in favour of women to a recently established women's institute. To that end, we are very pleased to welcome the imminent establishment and operationalization of a composite entity within the United Nations system for the advancement of gender equality. It will make it possible to ensure the coherent and efficient support of the United Nations system for the efforts of Member States.

In the context of Africa's resolute march towards a new beginning, the Beninese Government has adopted strategic measures based on the elimination of

poverty and on reinvigorated economic growth that will make Benin an emerging country by 2025. The challenges to be met are huge since nearly one third of the population of Benin currently lives below the poverty line in a country vulnerable to the threats of natural disasters and where food security is not fully guaranteed.

The measures implemented in particular by the Government of Mr. Boni Yayi, in place since April 2006 thanks to scrupulous respect for our Constitution, mark our resolve to move forward. Our economic performance in 2006 and 2007 proved that our strategic choices were correct. These measures included promoting microfinancing as an effective means of fighting poverty and social exclusion, especially that of women, by granting microcredit to the poorest — especially women, who are the most important pillar of society although economically disadvantaged; promoting entrepreneurship and youth employment; and the launching of multiple training programmes in order to integrate young people into the fabric of our socio-economic structure. We are also working on mechanizing agriculture, promoting education by offering free and mandatory primary education, and making free Caesarean sections available as a better approach to reproductive health.

These social measures were implemented at the same time that major work was begun on infrastructure. However, the ongoing economic recession and the worsening harmful consequences of climate change threaten to seriously jeopardize the considerable progress made in implementing this pivotal national project.

Only one year ago, the International Monetary Fund predicted that the gross domestic product of sub-Saharan African countries would increase by 6.7 per cent on average in 2009. Those forecasts were revised downward a few months later to 5.1 per cent, then to 3.5 per cent and last March to 3.25 per cent, and nothing guarantees that the growth rate will not decline further.

This decline in the growth rate has aggravated the danger of serious budgetary difficulties. We must maintain our rate of progress despite being subjected to the gruelling external shocks of the successive crises of the world economy in full recession. We are making considerable efforts to mobilize our internal resources. We welcome the good work done by the United Nations to mobilize additional resources from development partners in order to help pilot countries, including Benin, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These decisions were taken in the context of implementing the commitments made by the Group of Eight at Gleneagles, the Millennium Declaration, the 2001 Brussels Declaration on least developed countries, and all of the statements that we warmly welcomed and applauded at the recent Summit on Climate Change convened here by the Secretary-General.

The consequences of climate change considerably complicate the deal. Benin is among the most vulnerable countries and those least equipped to address climate change. In addition to torrential rains that are concentrated in just a few weeks of the year, coastal erosion due mainly to the rise in sea level has already been observed in Benin and neighbouring countries. We also have long and recurrent droughts and other natural disasters that are affecting our peoples. Scientists predict that, among other events, the coastal areas of West Africa will be submerged due to the rise in sea level of the Atlantic Ocean, whereas northern countries have already gained land along their coastlines.

We therefore need help to acquire the technologies and means necessary to combat coastal erosion because we cannot sit idly by while this disaster unfolds. In order to counter the coastal erosion already engulfing our cities and coastal lands, major work on infrastructure is crucial. Actions to be taken will be effective only if undertaken at the level of the entire subregion so as to ensure that all of the West African coastline is protected. To that end, we must mobilize vast resources. Perhaps we should consider establishing a multilateral investment fund, under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, to finance the major construction work that will be needed.

We need a United Nations able to coordinate the response to these major development challenges, raise the necessary resources to respond to the financial needs, and supervise the transfer of resources to be used by the international community to help the most vulnerable countries, including the least developed. We need a United Nations with the moral authority to involve the affluent countries in thorough reform of the architecture of governance and of economic and financial globalization in order to improve the capacity

of the international financial system to promote equitable development in all regions of the world.

The initiatives of the Group of Twenty in this area are laudable and must continue to ensure a thorough reform of the international economic system that will allow all countries to be integrated into the virtuous cycle of economic growth and sustainable development. We need a United Nations able to help emerging countries fully to shoulder the international commitments linked to their new status and to exploit their strengths to promote South-South and triangular cooperation in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to better adapt to climate change. Convinced that another name for peace is development and that peace and development are essential to our survival on Earth, we must find the essential means to promote peace through and for development.

We need a United Nations able to assure the effective prevention of armed conflict, if necessary by fielding robust peace or development missions to conduct operations for economic stabilization and the elimination of extreme poverty. We need a United Nations that makes full use of the opportunities for cooperation with regional organizations. In that connection, Benin calls for consistent implementation of the proposals made in the Prodi report (S/2008/813, annex) on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations.

We need a United Nations with strengthened capacities to contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes, inter alia, through mediation and the promotion of judicial settlements. We need a United Nations capable of rising to the challenges involved in settling the Palestinian question definitively; promoting disarmament and the regulation of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels; promoting fair trade; countering terrorism and organized transnational crime; exercising the responsibility to protect; fighting impunity by strengthening international justice; and protecting civilians, in particular children, women and the elderly in situations of armed conflict; and so on.

United Nations reform must be undertaken without hesitation in order to strengthen its effectiveness, legitimacy and credibility. Security Council reform through expansion in both categories of membership is, among other things, an unavoidable necessity of our times, as the Chairman of the African Union affirmed from this rostrum a few days ago.

The time has come to grant all peoples of the Earth their due place in the concert of free and prosperous nations. Benin is ready to cooperate without reservation in finding the most appropriate ways to redress the injustices of the past and to establish a new world order in the Security Council. Such an order must enable humankind to forge its common destiny in our common house, namely, the Earth. We have a sacred duty towards our planet, which includes behaving in a manner that serves to preserve its habitability for current and future generations. Yes, we need a United Nations that is more just and better able to respond to today's urgent needs as well as to the aspirations of the world's most vulnerable people.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alberto Gatmaitan Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

Mr. Romulo (Philippines) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to warmly congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his well-deserved election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I assure him of the full cooperation of the Philippines as he discharges the duties of his high office.

We are gathered here today, in this parliament of nations, to find meaningful solutions to the conflicts and crises facing our world today. Although there are signs of global recovery, now is neither the time for complacency nor for a return to business as usual. Our drive to enhance global development has clearly slowed, while the challenges to peace remain starkly before us.

Through globalization, we have witnessed unprecedented material progress and record poverty alleviation. Yet the poorest 40 per cent of the world's population still live on less than $2 per day. Nor have we resolved the climate change and food crises that oppress hundreds of millions of human beings.

A large part of global development has been the result of labour, including that of migrant workers. However, despite their contributions to the global economy, many migrants remain exposed to exploitation and abuse. Moreover, the peace dividend expected from the end of the cold war never

materialized, while we continue to confront nuclear proliferation and violent conflict. The shortage of aid resources and instability in trade and investment are generating a global development emergency. Many nations will not attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Development gains are being tragically lost.

Our march of progress must not stall — not on our watch and not while we have the will, the vision and the means to build a better world inspired by a shared commitment to justice, fairness, non-discrimination, progress and peace. We should do so by focusing on the five great challenges of our time.

The first challenge pertains to promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The second involves managing the global crisis to encourage equitable recovery, fairer globalization and faster poverty alleviation. The third entails protecting and promoting the rights of migrants, who continue to contribute to global development and the well-being of our societies. The fourth has to do with the taking of urgent measures to effectively address the adverse effects of climate change without further delay. And the fifth has to do with reducing the number of conflicts and expanding mutual understanding and respect through greater interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue.

(*spoke in English*)

Nuclear weapons and their technology are a threat to international peace and security, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is our central mechanism to contain, and eventually eliminate, that threat. The May 2010 NPT Review Conference, over which the Philippines will preside, will be the next opportunity for all of us to act on that matter in a concerted manner. We can be encouraged by certain recent developments on that front.

A constructive atmosphere prevailed during the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference. President Obama has announced that he will lead the United States to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is another key pillar of the global disarmament and NPT system. In addition, the United States and Russia are making headway, under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, to reduce their deployed nuclear warheads and delivery systems beyond the Treaty's upcoming expiry in December. In addition, the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone and other regional nuclear-weapon-free zones are continuing to reinforce the NPT system. Those positive developments inspire the Philippines in steering the Review Conference to conduct negotiations and consultations in an open and transparent manner. In that spirit, we reiterate our call for the few remaining countries that have not yet done so to accede both to the CTBT and the NPT, in order to give greater hope for lasting peace and security for our world.

The global financial and economic crisis is placing intolerable strain on the poorest of the poor and undermining years of efforts to attain internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and to combat ill-health and hunger. The crisis has been accompanied by increases in unemployment, with concomitant declining incomes and demand. The International Labour Organization estimates that unemployment could rise by 50 million by the end of 2009, thereby bringing the global unemployment rate to more than 7 per cent.

The Philippines and many other nations are implementing stimulus packages, accelerated employment-generation programmes and enhanced social safety nets. In the Philippines we have strengthened our banking sector and fiscal position through tough reforms that have blunted the full force of the global crisis. The Philippines is one of the few economies that continues to have positive growth in its gross domestic product. However, we cannot ignore the impact of the global crisis elsewhere in our interdependent world. The Philippines therefore joins other nations in the General Assembly in calling for a united effort in the United Nations to act for the common good of all our peoples.

The United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, which was held in this very Hall last June, presented Member States with lines of action that we must take now to stimulate the global economy, improve regulation and monitoring and reform processes and institutions to prevent any recurrence of the crisis.

We view the Global Jobs Pact put forward by the International Labour Organization, which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council this past July, as another important step towards recovering from the crisis. We reiterate our call on all countries to resist

protectionism in order to expand trade and investment flows. We also call on developed nations to maintain their commitments with regard to official development assistance. Furthermore, the voice of the developing world must now be fully heard in reforming international financial and development institutions so that we can forge a more equitable and stable global economic system to avoid future crises.

Global migrants are among the groups most adversely affected by the crisis. The international community therefore has a shared responsibility to ensure their protection, taking into full account the special vulnerabilities of the gender and family dimensions of the issue. The second Global Forum on Migration and Development, which the Philippines was privileged to chair in Manila, reinforced that important message by focusing on the human face of migration and on the human rights and empowerment of migrants. We urge all nations to accede to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and to avoid unfair restrictions on, and unfair treatment of, migrants.

We must carry the momentum of the Summit on Climate Change, held here in New York, forward into the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the road to Copenhagen this December. The world expects nothing less from us. The Philippines therefore calls on the developed countries concerned to present their firm post-Kyoto greenhouse gas emission targets, taking into account the ideal levels suggested by the scientific community. They must also assist developing countries to mitigate and adapt to worsening climate change by fulfilling their Framework Convention obligations to provide technological and financial support. As a coordinator of the G-77 in the talks, the Philippines will continue to work with all parties to help to ensure a positive outcome in Copenhagen.

The Philippines is doing its part to advance that vital global agenda. We recently enacted a landmark law to promote the development and use of renewable energy resources, especially biofuels. Earlier this month, the Philippines also hosted the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia. The Manila Declaration on Green Industry in Asia and the Framework of Action adopted at the Conference promote the integration of sustainable development into industrial development processes for the transition to resource-efficient and low-carbon industries. We hope that elements of the Manila Declaration will provide input for Copenhagen as well.

The international community must also focus on the urgent need to reduce tension and conflict fuelled by perceived differences between religions, faiths and civilizations. If left unattended, such conflict can fester, causing greater tension and untold human suffering and violence, which extremists can exploit. The urgency of the matter has prompted the Philippines and many partner nations and organizations to promote greater interfaith dialogue, both within the United Nations system as well as at regional and national levels. By building bridges of understanding, that global advocacy enhances peace and development.

Every year, the Philippines has submitted to the United Nations a draft resolution calling for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. The General Assembly has always adopted it unanimously. Also at the United Nations, we initiated the holding of the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace, which includes countries from every region of the world. In 2006, we also launched the global Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, which is headquartered in New York and made up of 54 Governments, 15 United Nations agencies and 110 religious non-governmental organizations represented at the United Nations. To reinforce that effort, the Philippines will host the first special Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) ministerial meeting on interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace and development in Manila this December. We are pleased to invite all United Nations Members and other interested nations to that important seminal meeting.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The spirit of multilateralism and prudent realism also requires that we support United Nations peacekeeping efforts. In crises and emergencies around the world, we must do more collectively to alleviate suffering and to help nations and communities to achieve self-sustaining peace. The Philippines will continue to be active in United Nations peacekeeping. Indeed, the Philippines has become one of the largest contributors of individual police officers to United Nations peacekeeping operations. More than 600 of our peacekeepers are serving with distinction around the world. Next month, we will send a battalion in support

of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, in the Golan Heights.

We stand on the cusp of history. It is in our hands, here at the United Nations, to shape the changes and trends necessary to bequeath to succeeding generations a lasting legacy of a world of greater justice, compassion and well-being. The Philippines is deeply honoured to assist and cooperate with all nations in the task of building a future where peace and prosperity reign unceasingly for the benefit of all humankind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mammadyarov (Azerbaijan): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of Libya on his election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I wish him every success. I should also like to thank his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his work. I would like to express my profound respect and appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his leadership in mobilizing the international community to make our world a better place to live.

We all recognize that the security of every State of the world can be better promoted and ensured with a multilateral security system. That paradigm was a principal reason behind the creation of the collective security system that has the United Nations at its core. Yet, after more than 60 years since the founding of the United Nations, the question remains of whether the contemporary international security architecture is addressing effectively and in a timely manner the multifaceted and interconnected challenges and threats confronting our world today.

The global character of today's challenges and threats makes geographic distance irrelevant when it comes to the formulation of security policy, as threats as we know them today transcend national borders and entire continents. The indirect repercussions of these threats may be as devastating and as costly as their direct impact. The interconnected and intertwined nature of current threats requires that we reconsider the very concept of security in broader terms that are not confined to the traditional military aspect of security, but also include its political, economic, energy, cultural, information and other dimensions.

The security of each State and, more broadly, international peace and security will depend upon whether States follow the norms and principles of international law and use them as a guiding tool for shaping their foreign and security policies. Following a common set of norms and rules on the international arena contributes to the transparency and predictability of State behaviour and hence consolidates international peace and security.

Unfortunately, the unlawful use of force has still not been eliminated from international relations. Civilian populations are still suffering today in many places around the world due to the manifest failure of individual States to fulfil their most basic and compelling responsibilities. Armed conflict, military aggression and foreign occupation involving the most serious international crimes are but a few vivid examples from our recent history of the bitter consequences of non-compliance by individual States with the norms and principles of international law. Governments that fail to obey the rules of international conduct will inevitably infringe upon individual liberties and freedoms at home, thus undermining democratic development.

The most vivid example of misconduct when it comes to the norms and principles of international law is the almost two-decades-long, and still unresolved, Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorny-Karabakh conflict, which also stands out as a major threat to international and regional peace and security. As a result of the aggression carried out by Armenia, almost one-fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan has been occupied, approximately 1 million ethnically cleansed Azerbaijanis have become internally displaced persons or refugees and thousands of Azerbaijan's historical and cultural heritage artifacts have been destroyed or looted.

In its four resolutions on the conflict, the Security Council has reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inadmissibility of the use of force to acquire the territory of the other States. It has also recognized Nagorny-Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan and called for an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The General Assembly — in resolution 62/243, which was adopted

on 14 March 2008 and which is entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" — expressed respect and support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.

As reflected in those resolutions, the approach of the General Assembly and the Security Council is fully consistent with the position of Azerbaijan, which from the beginning advocated a step-by-step approach to settling the conflict as the only viable option. A number of important steps have to be taken, starting with the withdrawal of Armenian forces from all the occupied territories, the rehabilitation of those territories, the return of internally displaced persons to their homes in and around the Nagorny-Karabakh region and the opening of all communications channels for mutual use. That will make it possible to eliminate the consequences of the conflict, and will pave the way for the establishment of a durable peace and stability in the region that is conducive to the establishment of the legal status of the Nagorny-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan, with due account taken of, and an equal hearing for, the voices of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the region.

The current settlement process offers some hope of breaking the stalemate in the process of resolution of the conflict. The acceptance by Armenia of the step-by-step approach to a settlement to the conflict on the basis of the principles and norms of international law and the decisions and documents adopted in that framework, as reflected in the joint declaration signed in Moscow in November 2008 by the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation, is a positive sign. Azerbaijan is ready to continue talks with Armenia's leadership for a secure and stable South Caucasus region and beyond, which will make it possible to take advantage of the existing ample regional opportunities for the benefit of all.

Against the background of the negative developments in the region to which I have referred, let me briefly share some information about the positive economic performance of my country.

Azerbaijan has minimized the impact of the global economic downturn on its economy and managed to sustain growth. Having maintained its dynamism in 2009, as of today our gross domestic product (GDP) growth stands at almost 4 per cent. We have recorded a drop in the poverty rate since 2003, from 44 per cent to 13 per cent. The Government of Azerbaijan has substantially improved trade and investment conditions in an effort to strengthen national competitiveness and spur private-sector development, especially in the non-oil sector. Non-oil GDP growth is at almost 16 per cent, the highest rate in 5 years. In recognition of its results-oriented reforms and thought-out economic policy, Azerbaijan was qualified by the World Bank as one of the world's top reformers.

Azerbaijan — a strategically located country with a young and skilled population, great resources and a dynamic economy — is inevitably taking a leading role in the region and increasingly becoming a pivotal player and credible actor beyond the region. The successful implementation of such infrastructure projects as the Baku-Supsa and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil-exporting pipelines and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline have not only boosted our economy, they have also contributed to the development of neighbouring States. A modern energy infrastructure coupled with vast energy resources have transformed Azerbaijan into an energy hub of international importance. Azerbaijan has proven itself a reliable partner and an indispensable and secure energy source for Europe and beyond.

Azerbaijan's location at the crossroads of major East-West and North-South transport corridors and its rapidly developing national transportation infrastructure, which is connected to regional highway and railroad networks, highlights the strategic importance of my country. The completion of the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad and the commissioning of the brand new seaport at Alat, on Azerbaijan's coast on the Caspian Sea, will increase the role of Azerbaijan as a communications hub linking Europe with Asia.

Azerbaijan has also put forward an initiative to establish a Trans-Eurasian information superhighway, which is expected to serve as a major element of the East-West transport corridor and facilitate the provision of Internet service, telecommunications systems, e-information resources and e-economies to 20 countries of the region.

Today we are living at a time of heightened religious and ethnic awareness, which in certain instances has taken exaggerated forms and is sometimes maliciously exploited to fuel conflicts on

ethnic, religious or cultural grounds. The broad recognition by the Member States of the United Nations of the role of the dialogue among civilizations, and specifically of inter-cultural and inter-religious harmony in maintaining international peace and security, can only be praised.

We fully support the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the importance of increasing educational efforts to eliminate hate messages, distortion, prejudice and negative bias from textbooks and other educational media and to ensure a basic knowledge and understanding of the world's main cultures, civilizations and religions.

As a country where long-standing traditions of tolerance and peaceful coexistence of different religions and ethnic groups over centuries have become an inseparable part of the culture, Azerbaijan has repeatedly demonstrated its determination to act as a natural bridge bringing together different continents, cultures and civilizations through the promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding among peoples of different cultures and religions.

Azerbaijan was among the first countries to join the Alliance of Civilizations, an initiative by Turkey and Spain. Azerbaijan has hosted a number of important events in recent years, with a view to translating into concrete actions the recommendations contained in the *Alliance of Civilizations* report of the High-level Group appointed by the Secretary-General. Most recently, we held the Baku International Forum on Expanding the Role of Women in Cross-cultural Dialogue, which we believe will raise awareness about the role of women in that regard. In December 2008, we hosted a conference of culture ministers from Council of Europe member States. For the first time in the history of the Council of Europe, ministers from member States of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization joined the event. The Baku declaration adopted at the conference envisages, inter alia, an intercultural dialogue between European and neighbouring States.

At the fifth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, Azerbaijan's capital of Baku was declared the Islamic culture capital for 2009. This autumn we will be hosting the sixth Conference of Ministers of Culture of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, where we will continue discussions of our future actions in fostering dialogue among civilizations.

The multilateral system, with the United Nations at its heart, is undergoing serious changes that will test its strength, viability and credibility. This requires more dedicated efforts aimed at strengthening the United Nations and promoting the effectiveness of the Organization through the implementation of its decisions and resolutions. Azerbaijan believes that, as the only truly global organization, the United Nations has to be stronger and capable of engaging on a range of pressing global issues in every part of the world, as well as addressing the aspirations and concerns of each Member State. We continue to support reform of the Organization so that it may be renewed and revitalized and made more responsive.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paul Toungui, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, la Francophonie and Regional Integration of Gabon.

Mr. Toungui (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to warmly congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I would also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the Assembly at its sixty-third session, for the work he accomplished during his mandate. And I reaffirm the confidence and support of my country for the Secretary-General as he continues his efforts as the leader of this Organization.

Gabon has just gone through a critical phase in its history as a nation. With the loss of President Omar Bongo Ondimba on 8 June, our country saw the start of a delicate period of political transition, during which we had to dig deep to find the strength necessary to confront our destiny. Under the relevant provisions of our founding laws and the leadership of interim President Rose Francine Rogombé, we were able to bring our electoral process to a successful conclusion, culminating in a vote on 30 August. As a result of this unprecedented election, Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba was officially proclaimed the elected President of the Republic by the Constitutional Court, which under the law has a month to examine claims or appeals resulting from the election before the elected President takes office, given that nine unsuccessful candidates have appealed to the high court.

As members know, ensuring such an important democratic transition in the brief time allocated under the law was very challenging for our country, and I am proud to say that we have met it, considering what was at stake and what we knew had to be done. I submit here my own tribute to the people of Gabon, the majority of whom have proclaimed their support for the values of peace and democracy. I would also like to thank the peoples of Africa and of the entire world, as well as the representatives of States and international and civil society organizations who came to observe the elections in Gabon and to nourish our democratic process with their experience. As we open a new page in our march towards progress and development, we know we can rely on the international community and on the friends of Gabon all over the world to confront the challenges of today and tomorrow.

As regards those challenges, we are determined, today more than ever before, to spare no effort to establish good political and economic governance and to consolidate our gains and our legacy in the areas of stability, peace and democracy. We are also motivated by our determination to pursue our endeavours in maintaining regional and international peace, by strengthening our links of solidarity and fraternity with all our neighbouring countries.

The sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly is opening its deliberations in an international context marked by a number of successive crises: economic and financial, food, energy and environmental. We must bring urgent and lasting responses to these various crises by acting collectively to curb them and ensuring that our peoples achieve the development they desire with all their heart. The United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held in New York from 24 to 30 June, was an important initiative, enabling us to express our concerns and declare our commitment to fighting the crisis and its repercussions for our countries.

The unity we reached on measures to be taken to deal with the crisis will require the complete and unified participation of our countries in developing appropriate solutions. Beyond the specifics relating to each country, we must make sure together that the measures and actions taken to fight the crisis be proportional in scope to its gravity and intensity.

The food crisis was at the centre of our discussions during the sixty-third session of the Assembly and was the focus of two important declarations, one adopted at the High-level Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008, and one adopted at the thirteenth African Union Conference of Heads of State and Government, held in Sirte in July. We must now implement the declarations and measures adopted as a result of meetings held at the international and regional levels. It is only through strict adherence to our commitments that we will be able to identify the adverse effects of such crisis situations on the development of our respective States.

The challenge of feeding a planet whose population is growing is intimately linked to the questions of the environment and climate change. The harmful effects of global warming on our ability to increase agricultural production in such a way as to bring about a lasting solution to the food crisis are no longer in doubt. I am pleased once again that this question was chosen as a theme for the recent high-level dialogue organized by the Secretary-General on the sidelines of the current session, with a view to the forthcoming Copenhagen Climate Conference in December. In this regard, we reaffirm our support for Africa's common position on climate change, adopted in Addis Ababa in August by the heads of State or Government of the African Union.

My country, Gabon, whose forests are among those that make up the great Congo basin, has adhered unreservedly to the various international conventions concerning the struggle against climate catastrophe and the protection of biodiversity. We have resolved to assume our share of responsibility by dedicating 11 per cent of our territory to humanity, by creating, among other things, 13 national parks.

The interdependence of the crises the international community faces highlights, now more than ever before, the need to breathe new life into efforts to ensure international peace and security, but also to conduct collective action at the global level. It is with this conviction that Gabon has submitted its candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period 2010-2011, for which it was endorsed by the African Union at its thirteenth Conference of Heads of State and Government, held at Sirte in July.

My country is also convinced that this Organization cannot remain frozen, but must evolve in order to enable it to adapt better to the current international context. It is for this reason that world leaders, through the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), reaffirmed the need to strengthen the United Nations to allow it to fulfil its principal missions more effectively.

In that regard, my country welcomes the progress made since the 2005 World Summit in implementing a great many of the important recommendations of the Outcome Document in the framework of the United Nations reform process. While pleased with these major advances, we must continue our efforts to bring these reforms to completion. Building a more just and secure world capable of responding to its peoples' profound aspirations depends on it.

The meeting rose at 10.30 p.m.